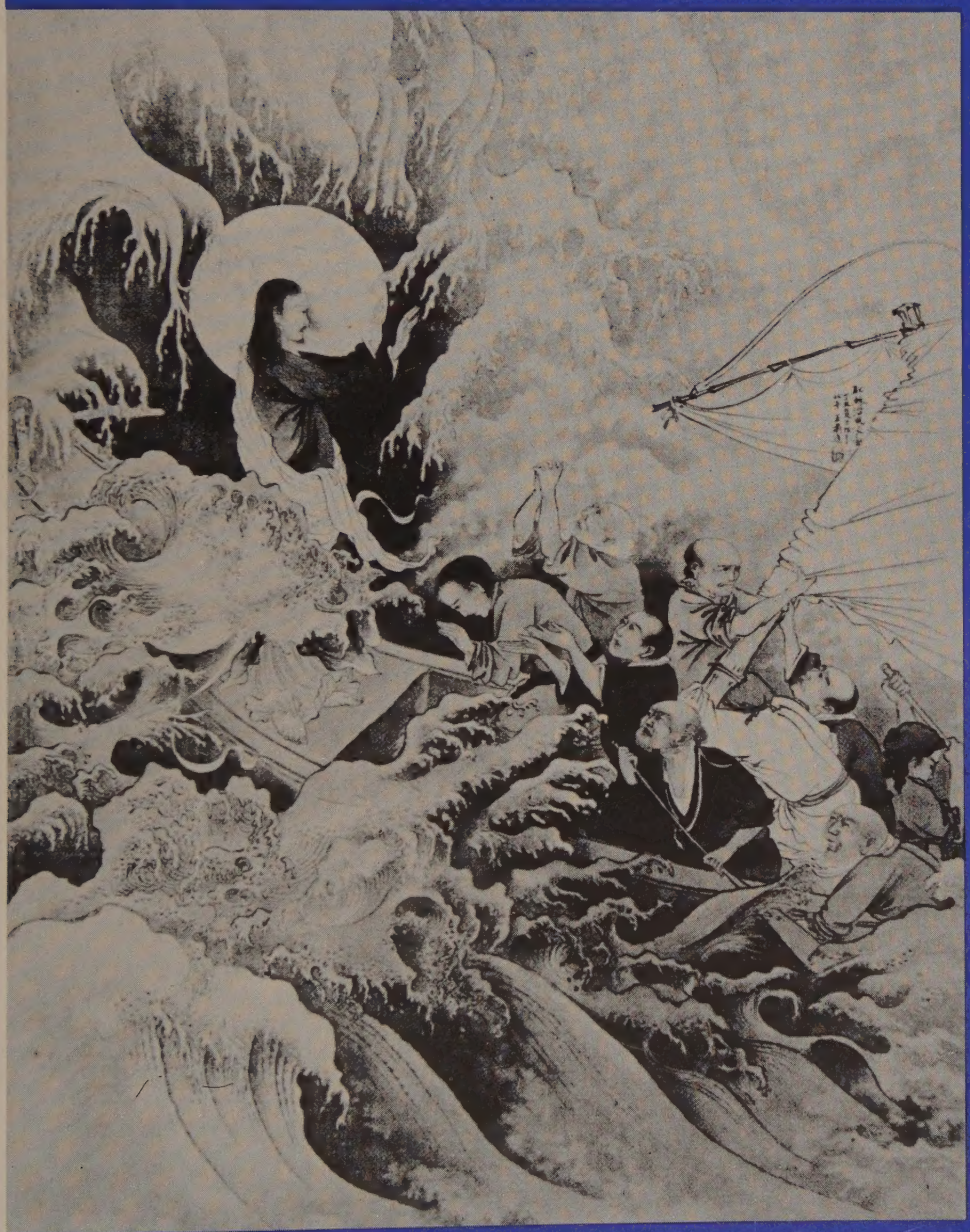
JULY-SEPTEMBER 1961

Crossroads



A Study and Program Magazine for Adults

VOLUME 11 : NUMBER 4

THE Chinese painting on the cover of this issue of CROSSROADS is called, needless to say, *The Stilling of the Storm.* Its typical Chinese emphasis on *line* rather than *mass* gives more motion and turmoil to the storm than a conventional Western painting might convey.

The picture itself is symbolic of the church's peril in this confusing and disjointed world. On all sides the church is surrounded by the sea of doubt, distrust, and the claims of rival philosophies. Christ's disciples are torn by conflicting obligations. Some implore help of the Master, others put an oar into the sea or seek to right the mast. In all the turbulence one person stands erect and clearly visible—Christ himself.

This issue of CROSSROADS reflects the plight of the church in the world. In Unit I of the *Christian Faith and Life* articles, for example, the impact of the multiplicity of denominations, the "cries of race and clan," and the crushing impersonal forces of the city are considered in relation to the Christian witness. In the summer program articles, Samuel H. Miller, Dean of Harvard Divinity School, presents a call to the church to find the point of light again that can illuminate life in terms understandable and relevant to storm-tossed mid-twentieth-century mankind. In the second unit of *The Christian Round Table* some young adults talk—three fifths of the unit is a transcription of an actual conversation—about their struggles to reach "the elusive goal" of a meaningful outlook on life in the church's fellowship. Frustration and despair are not strangers to any sphere of modern life, from international affairs to daily work to home relations. "Depression," one of the six "Parents' Discussion Group" articles, explores the "everlasting dissatisfaction" that haunts people today.

If the weight of the world appears to make this issue of CROSSROADS intolerably wearing, it is a reflection of the truth portrayed in the cover painting: men will find their peace and rest only through the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ. He alone has sovereign power to still the storm that engulfs this world.

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Crossroads

A STUDY AND PROGRAM MAGAZINE FOR ADULTS

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The traveler abroad finds in our exported art rather than in our exported gadgetry a true reflection of our national culture.

THE FACE

Not long ago I made a five-month journey through Europe that took me as far east as Istanbul and as far north as Imatra, a Finnish town near the Russian border. Everywhere there was evidence of improvement in the economy, of restoration of the fabric of town and city, though in many places the gulf between rich and poor still shocks the American.

As I took a fresh look at the European cultural scene, it seemed as if I were spanning the centuries as well as the continent. For I saw both the new and the old. In Istanbul I examined the remains of early Christian and Byzantine culture and met the lively Patriarch of Constantinople. I visited Maria-Laach, the venerable Benedictine monastery in Germany which is the center of a Roman Catholic liturgical movement concerned with the function of the church in the world even more than with worship, architecture, art, and music. I went to the great museums to see the treasures of the past, and to the new churches in France to see the work of the great artists of this century. Twice I visited the Roman Catholic pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp, designed by Le Corbusier, the Swiss Protestant whose creation ("hard and soft at the same time, like the gospel") many regard as the greatest architectural achievement of the century. And at Helsinki I saw one of Europe's most handsome buildings, the House of Culture, from which the Finnish Communist Party conducts its cultural program, aware that through the arts people can be reached more effectively than through propaganda.

As I visited countless towns well known and relatively unknown, looked into their churches and museums and explored their squares and alleys, I was more conscious than ever of how Europe is more a cultural than a geographical entity. Through its philosophy and theology, its music, literature, and theater, its architecture, and all its other artistic expressions, the culture that is Europe excites the imagination and reveals its power to influence the future of the world.

All-pervasive Presence

But I saw not only Europe; I saw America as well. For the pervasiveness of America in Europe is inescapable. Without doubt, the most widespread emblem in the world today is not the sign of the cross but the sign of the "Coke." In country after country I saw the emblem of the Coca-Cola bottle; in language after language—in wine-imbibing France as well as in the abstemious Middle East—I read the injunction: "Drink Ice-cold Coca-Cola."

Almost equally pervasive is the imitation of American garb. Walking down a quiet street late at night in Sweden's university city of Lund, after a long conversation with the theologian Gustav Aulén, I saw in the window of a men's shop a display, not of the latest fashions from Saville Row or from Italy, but of blue jeans, red-and-black shirts, and a black leather belt. The sign read: "Akta Amerikanska JEANS—27.50 kroner: Endfasthos." And in English: "Real American Sanforized Denim in the Style of James Dean." What had started out as ordinary American workmen's trousers of practical denim had become the international garb of the new generation.

If the tight-fitting denim jeans have become the uniform for European youth, American jazz has become the idiom of their musical expression. Wherever one goes—to the dusty streets of Athens, to the artists' quarter of Florence, to a restaurant in Amiens or a coffee house in The Hague—jazz in its various forms has become in popular life the common musical denominator. For countless millions, jazz is both American and universal—doubtless because it arose from an oppressed minority and is based on the common fears and hopes of all men. It breaks through the barriers of race and state and crosses the borders of nations, even beyond the Iron Curtain. . . .

MR. HALVERSON is executive director of the department of worship and the arts of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. This article is reprinted from the June 15, 1960, issue of *The Christian Century*. Used by permission.

By Marvin Halverson

AMERICA SHOWS

The Role of the Hero-Figure

What is the meaning of the seeming universality of the appeal of jeans and jazz? Is it merely the result of successful merchandising? Was it manipulation by the motion-picture industry that made the late James Dean a hero-figure to mid-twentieth-century youth? Or did the movies merely make available to all youth a symbol of their loneliness in a world they never made, of their frustration in a world which has no structure of meaning, of their desire to know the community of belonging one to another? How does the church relate itself to a national culture in which these ideal images and hero-figures arise out of our subconscious life?

Furthermore, in Europe one cannot escape or ignore the omnipresent American movie. Americans who live in our larger cities where cinemas show good foreign films and often revive our own film classics easily forget how the smaller cities and towns of our land are inundated with movies whose chief offense is not so much violence as mediocrity. But in Europe the incredible banality of most American movies becomes obvious, while the few good ones stand out clearly.

The popularity of our "western" movies among Europeans is evidence not only of their occasional excellence, but of an appeal which is more than American. Fundamentally, westerns are all alike, differing only in the degree of imagination and skill with which the basic plot is developed. Society, the world, is evil, possesses no resources within to save itself; salvation comes from outside, through the Hero, who generally arrives to bring justice, not in the name of established law and order but in terms which are self-authenticating. Since God presents himself to us in unexpected ways, is it possible that for the modern age the Hero is a hidden Christ?

Europeans have felt that with its ritual action the western is our basic folk-myth, that at its best it constitutes a popular art akin to great art. Manifestly, the western arises out of our nation's frontier experience, but it incorporates messianistic themes in such striking manner as to challenge many interpretations of American culture. In *The Kingdom of God in America* H. Richard Niebuhr summed up popular religion in America: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." Subsequent commentators on our national religious life have echoed his assessment. But the western presents a view of the world that suggests another motif in our national life: its plot starts with a world of sin and struggle for power, and through its ritual pattern of action it argues that man does not save himself, nor is society redeemed through its own resources or without sacrifice. Can it be that the western is more profound than our popular religion?

What Most Appeals

Whether they represent "popular" or "high" culture, our arts convey a more appealing image of America than do the products of our industry. We have foolishly thought that our technical superiority is the most distinctive feature of our national life, the feature most likely to impress people overseas. At the close of the American exhibition in Moscow last October [1959], Max Frankel, Russian correspondent for *The New York Times,* wrote: "The United States, as seen in Sokolniki Park, is a nation obsessed with comfort and the gadgetry of comfort, with gay color and sound, with fun and a good time." Fortunately, the books and art objects shown at the exhibition demonstrated other dimensions of American life. And the New York Philharmonic, moving from triumph to triumph on its recent European tour, brought to Moscow evidence that our culture embraces more than gadgetry. At a time when America is recognizing that Russia is outdistancing her in speed of technological advance, it is important for us to realize that it is our arts which impress, that it is our arts more than anything else which say most truly what we are. Through our literature and theater, through our architecture

and other arts, a new image of America is being set before the world.

The most immediate impression our arts make upon the Europeans—as they made on me when I viewed them from abroad—is the youthful freshness and energy they disclose. In Florence one of Italy's great architects and artists told me: "We are old, we are tired. If one wants to be nourished by the past, this is the place to come. But if one wishes to be an artist, one should go to America. There is vitality and strength. You are the center of cultural energy. The future belongs to you."

Certainly the exhibition of new American painting which visited Basel, Milan, Madrid, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, and London during 1958 and early 1959 made a lasting impact, first of all through the size and strength of the works. Furthermore, just as American art at the Moscow exhibition was shocking to Soviet officialdom, it was impressive in its freedom of form as well as in its freedom from tradition.

A "Highly Moral" Vocation

But if we recognize only vitality and freedom as notable qualities in our art, we miss the full significance of that art for an understanding of our culture. Our lack of such tradition as Europe possesses has undoubtedly intensified our search for truth with fidelity to the inner vision; our best artists have seen their work as a deeply personal, moral vocation.

Robert Motherwell, whose abstract-expressionist painting has particularly impressed Europeans, once said of his vocation, "The function of the artist is to make actual the spiritual so that it is there to be possessed." And he characterized the work of our artists as an incarnation of "venturesomeness, integrity, sensitivity, knowingness, passion, dedication, sincerity . . . which taken altogether represents the ethical background in relation to a given work of modern art." Although European antecedents cannot be denied, it seems quite likely that the strong tendency of American painting toward nonfigurative subject matter is reinforced by our heritage of Puritan iconoclasm, a heritage which has made possible art of great inner vision and mystical power, as in the work of Mark Tobey and William Baziotes.

Awareness of the moral nature of artistic activity is not limited to our painters, but extends to the large company of other serious men of arts and letters. The insistence of present-day architects that architecture be moral is fundamentally a religious proposition. The key concern for honesty with respect to the use of materials is not an equation of morality with religion, but rather an awareness of the religious demand that man relate himself to the other orders of nature in the light of God's creation.

On my visit to Switzerland I asked Karl Barth what he considers the beautiful to be. He replied, "That which fulfills its purpose." To which I responded, "You sound like an American!" As he chuckled I added, "You see, the foundation tenet of modern architecture has been the credo formulated in America in the nineteenth century, 'Form follows function.'" "That is excellent," he said. "I must put it down."

"Form follows function" was not a thesis which arose out of abstract speculation; instead, it describes what we have been doing in America since the seventeenth century. The New England farmhouse, the Pennsylvania barn, the Shaker furniture, the Yankee clipper ship, the ax of the frontiersman, the American clock, and our early industrial buildings—all were forms directly related to their purpose. They did not pretend to be something other than what they were, and as such they were the forerunners of today's good industrial design and architecture. Their significance for an understanding of American culture is their reflection of an attitude toward life and nature which is profoundly religious, an attitude which sees life fulfilled in the daily task, sees the divine disclosed in the ordinary, acknowledges God as the creator and lord of nature even though man often is forced to struggle with that nature.

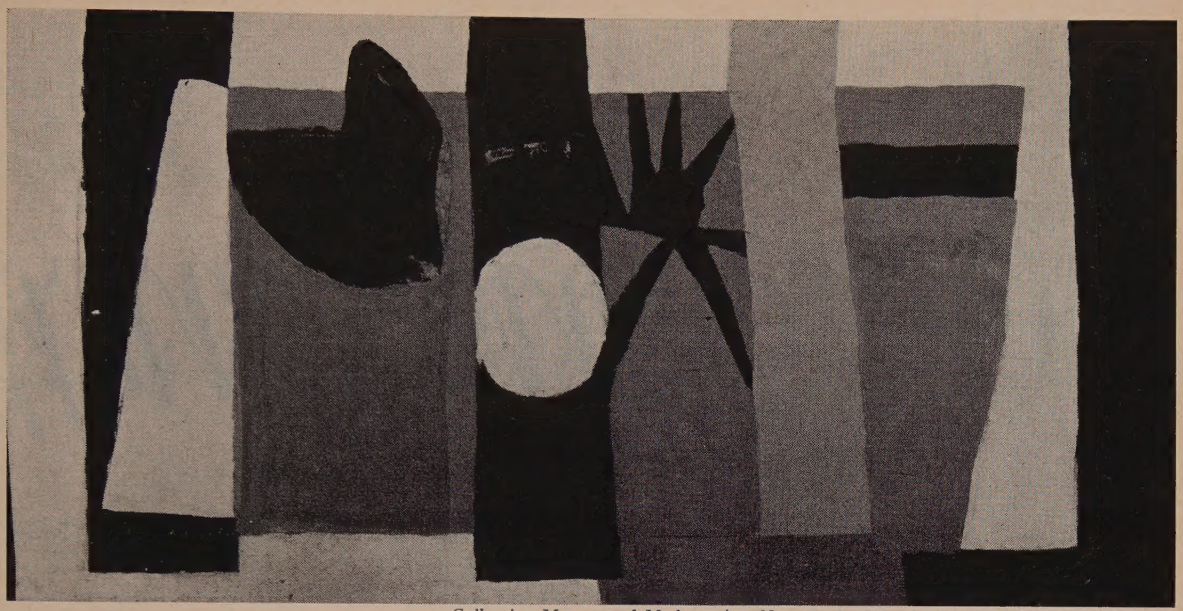
Of all our arts it is literature which has developed most fully, and it is our literature which presents the American image most widely throughout the world. American novels and plays are available in original editions as well as in translations in bookstores in every corner of the globe, and American literature frequently influences the writing of other lands.

And it is in our literature that the religious themes which run through American culture can be seen most clearly. The works of such giants of the nineteenth century as Hawthorne and Melville with their awareness of man's guilt, such poets as Whitman with his hymning of the American dream of perfection and democracy, were forerunners of our best writing today.

Unease Reflected in Literature

To name such contemporary writers as William Faulkner, Marianne Moore, Nathaniel West, Carson McCullers, Robert Penn Warren, Robert Frost, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, even Jack Kerouac, is to suggest the range of our literature and the variety of its expression. It is a literature which argues that we are not altogether comfortable in our split-level existences or happily rooted in our green suburbs. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* had a surprisingly long run on Broadway and on the road, though on the surface it would seem that this play about a salesman trapped in the closed system of his world of false assumptions would have little appeal for the thousands of businessmen who saw it. Is it possible that the plight of Willy Loman and the pathos of his emptiness spoke more significantly to the middle-class American than would the "optimistic" literature for which *Life* magazine has called?

Thoughtful Europeans insist that our arts say more truly who we are as a people and afford a better clue to the fundamental character of American culture



Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3d.

THE VOYAGE, by Robert Motherwell, is one example of the strong tendency of American painting toward nonfigurative subject matter, a tendency reinforced by our heritage of Puritan iconoclasm.

than our technical, scientific, and commercial achievements. Through the image they project, our arts contradict the view that we are dominated by money, commerce, and technology; they testify to deep hungers in the American soul. Much of their strength stems from their rootage in the religious soil of our beginnings as a people. In both their "fine" and "popular" forms they demonstrate the endurance of religious apprehensions and depths in the face of relentless pressures toward commercialization, trivialization, and vulgarization. Despite its frequent distortion, American jazz continues to sound an authentic note because it arose out of the life of simple and oppressed people; it was not contrived by recording companies or disc jockeys or music publishers; it continues to bear within it the mark of suffering, the joy of life itself, and the hope which arises out of the Christian message. And our westerns suggest that a subconscious awareness of the tragic runs deeply through our culture. So does our great literature. As people in other lands encounter our arts they begin to realize that Americans share with them a common humanity. We are not a race apart.

Search for Perfection

But our arts are marked not only by the awareness of estrangement, injustice, loneliness, despair, and imperfection. From its beginnings American culture has been directed by a demanding search for perfection. This religious quest not only brought colonists to the new world but drove men on and on again and again into new frontiers. As the evidence of human frailty and of sin fissured society and churches, new communities of perfection were dreamed and new religious bodies created in the effort to establish the perfect society and achieve the perfect life. American arts with their search for perfection and clarity of vision suggest that the drive to realize the Kingdom is reflected not only in our social life but in our artistic expression as well.

Looking at America from the perspective of Europe can be a disquieting experience. The confusion and clutter of our life are appalling. The disorder of our cities, which denies the order of God's intention for man, and the contempt of man and nature seen in our vast industrial deserts are blasphemous. And the cacophony of our common life, the loss of critical judgment, the abdication of personal responsibility, are inescapable aspects of our cultural scene.

Yet when all this is perceived and our disabilities reckoned, a vision of other dimensions in American culture emerges. Our arts display a vigor and integrity and disclose an understanding of life which makes of them a redemptive and renewing force in our society. They not only give a fresh image of our life, but serve as custodians and bearers of religious dimensions which are often neglected by the churches themselves. They stand out as strong but neglected allies of religion.

The old culture of Europe was shaped by the force of religion and molded in the crucible of the church's life. But that culture has exhausted its power of shaping new worlds. Now it is American culture which is the formative factor in the emergence of an international culture. Our churches have a responsibility to relate themselves positively and imaginatively to our culture, thus serving not only the nation but all the nations of the world.

Miss Muffet

CHRIST commanded his followers to "preach the gospel to every creature." Evidently he meant to include *all* human creatures, whether they happen to live in the country, in the small town, or in the city. From Christ's time to our own, this task, especially in the city, has always had peculiar difficulties. And many generations of churches attempting to minister to the people of metropolitan areas have faced and overcome those difficulties with varying degrees of success over the years.

What about our own generation? The fact is that a metropolitan ministry today, if it is centered in a somewhat typical Protestant church, must face up to additional obstacles and hazards that are largely of its own creating. These arise from what I have chosen to call Protestant *groupness*—a term that has no scientific or ecclesiastical standing, but the generality and dissonance of which are something of a virtue.

Curds and Whey

Let me suggest the nature of this groupness, and the problem it presents, by recounting several occasions when it raised its conspicuous head.

A number of city pastors met to share experience and insight in the business of ministering to a changing city. Several had the problem of race and color staring them in the face; but, as it turned out, this was only one facet of a still larger and more inclusive difficulty. Here is how one man with long experience in city pastorates focused the issue:

"We have new people moving into our church neighborhood who are not the kind we're used to. And I'm frank to admit that our church has very little to offer them. For the most part they are poor, uneducated families, drifting into the city from the rural areas. Their morals aren't too good, and their religious upbringing has been chaotic. They aren't used to the dignified services we have at our church. Even when we invite them to attend, most of them don't come. And the few who do come once almost never return a second time."

This veteran of the metropolitan ministry paused a moment, reflecting, then added: "Probably it's my preaching that scares them away as much as anything. But I just can't preach to them. I wasn't trained to do the kind of emotional sermonizing that these people seem to want."

This minister was not alone in his outlook. And, incidentally, the question for him had nothing to do with race or color, since he was serving in a pristine white neighborhood. His difficulties were with a miscellaneous group whose economic strata, cultural background, and prestige level were below that of his church's normal clientele. This cleavage was apparently bringing to a standstill the evangelistic, educational, and pastoral thrust of one more Protestant church in today's rapidly changing city.

Groupness was also in evidence when a committee of thoughtful laymen met to consider the future of their particular church in a changing neighborhood. They had before them the results of a survey that demonstrated statistically four significant facts. It showed, first, that the church had been declining in membership and effectiveness for more than a decade. Secondly, the church was increasingly out of touch with the surrounding community. Thirdly, nearly 65 per cent of the church's present membership belonged to white-collar occupational groups, including professionals, proprietors, managers, and sales people. The fourth significant fact was that in the surrounding neighborhood, more than 50 per cent of the residents

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Goes to Church

By Harry P. Phillips, Jr.

were to be classified as laborers, service workers, operatives, and craftsmen—with the population in these categories evidently on the increase.

The committee discussed these findings at length, and in the end a large majority agreed that the disparity or variance between church members and neighborhood residents in occupational and class alignment appeared to be the root cause of the church's plight. They went on to prophesy their church's continuing inevitable decline. As one committeeman said:

"After all, the interests of our church members are not the same as the interests of the neighborhood people. The services and programs that have meant so much to us don't mean a thing to the new families that are now moving in."

It was a devastating overstatement. Whether wholly true or not, it was indicative of a state of mind that I am calling "Protestant groupness."

The idea is very generally abroad among Protestants that a local church, though in principle required to "preach the gospel to every creature," is in fact incapable of doing it. This is because each local Protestant church has an orientation toward the group needs and the group interests of its existing membership. Such an orientation fosters an inescapable exclusiveness. According to one student of church life:

"Protestantism . . . has not succeeded in reaching any group with which it was not indigenous. . . . Protestantism has not even found it easy to succeed with people with whom it is indigenous in the sense that it has been able to make institutions developed on one social level available to people living on another. . . . Protestant churches do not easily reach new-coming Protestant people if they differ in a considerable degree from the types already found in the churches." [1]

Groupness, then, is a curding of Protestantism into exclusive clusters called local churches. It happens, apparently, as a result of forces compounded of economic considerations, cultural elements, personal values, and prestige factors. For the most part, groupness coincides with what sociologists call "awareness of social class," but also takes into account groupings due to religious inheritance and denominational background.

Along Came a Spider

With this understanding of the term in mind, let us now look more closely at manifestations of Protestant group consciousness, and ask, "What is its influence upon the metropolitan Protestant church?" This question has been attracting the widespread attention of sociologists. From their findings we can briefly sketch the stratification and exclusiveness that go with Protestant groupness. (Sociology is not an infallible science, to be sure. Yet we may agree with a report presented to the Third World Conference on Faith and Order at Lund, 1952, that "the churches, especially in their official leaders and theologians, must be attentive to the insights of sociology and all sciences which bring a legitimate criticism to bear upon our Christian institutions in their human and historical limitations." [2])

Among those who have studied the sociology of Protestant church life there appears to be a fair degree of unanimity in support of a conclusion that has been phrased in this way: "Religion in America can be described sociologically as a function of class." I would prefer to say "as a function of groupness."

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[1] From *The St. Louis Church Survey*, by H. Paul Douglass. Copyright, 1924, by George H. Doran Company.

[2] From *Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions*. SCM Press, London.

Given their fairly loose, voluntary organization, Protestant churches generally operate with notable efficiency when their members feel at ease with one another. And this is most readily and spontaneously generated when church members are similarly situated as to economic level, educational background, social group, and the like. Protestant group orientation seems to go right along with the social stratification of American life.

One line of sociological investigation has shown, for example, that belonging to a particular denominational group regularly means belonging to a distinct social group. In general, upper-class Protestants are much more likely to attend an Episcopal church. Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Lutheran congregations in many areas have the middle-class families on their rolls. The Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist churches, and the irregular sects seem to draw the church-attending portions of the working classes. Although a denomination's rank in the social hierarchy may vary from community to community, denominational stereotypes exist widely. And the churches of a given community will probably be recognized as reproducing whatever cleavages there may be in the community's social fabric. This finding has led one commentator to state in measured words that "religious organization reflects rather than sets the tone of American society." Here is a free-wheeling version of the same conclusion:

"The actual ecclesiology of the layman in the main-line Protestant churches is that his church is a 'club' of fine Christian people whose fellowship he enjoys. . . . Congeniality is the main criterion in deciding which church to join, and . . . real divisions in churches are [not religious but] residential, racial, and economic." [3]

And Sat Down Beside Her

Along another line of investigation, sociologists have come to some conclusions about the "upward striving" of Americans in our semiopen class society as it affects church membership. Today's Horatio Alger is likely to change his church denomination a number of times as he climbs the ladder of success. If he began in the membership of an irregular sect, his first move will probably be to one of the regular and recognized denominations. And though he may remain with the denomination in later moves, conspicuous success may well carry him across denominational lines one or more times into a group that enjoys high, unimpeachable status. However, if his rise is especially rapid and conspicuous, then the chances are excellent that he will rise right out of the church entirely, either because he is too busy for church participation or, possibly, because he feels himself too compromised. In any event, one consequence of the social ranking of churches in the minds of American Protestants is "the tendency of people who rise in the social scale to change their religious affiliations in the process."

One further line of sociological study needs to be mentioned. It has to do with how ministers carry out their calling in the pattern of Protestant groupness. The message preached from the pulpits of the different churches has been found to vary significantly, according to the interests and convictions of the groups comprising their membership. One commentator has dramatized the findings by suggesting that the theology and the sermon content presented to a given congregation can be reliably inferred from the average size of the wheel bases of the cars parked outside the church on Sunday morning. The smaller wheel bases appear before churches in which is proclaimed a fervent eschatology to those who are economically unsuccessful and socially unaccepted. The emphasis is on "status reversal"—the pulling down of the mighty from their seats and the exalting of those of low degree. The promise is that a new order will arrive, if not on earth then most assuredly in heaven.

The medium-wheel-base cars go with middle-class religion, which sanctifies the values of upward mobility. This religion stresses the virtues of dynamic effort and teamwork and counsels boundless optimism and perseverance in the face of reverses or disappointment. Large-wheel-base cars stand at the curb, ready to receive the successful few. These people attend church periodically to have their peace of mind renewed—chiefly through the acceptance of things as they are. They are assuaged by proffered assurances that God rewards virtue in this world as well as in the next and multiplies his blessings on the upright.

This analysis is caricature—and since the arrival in force on church parking lots of the sports car and the imported midget, the caricature has lost some of its punch. But the sober facts underlying the caricature suggest that as Protestants cling to the church of their own group, "they will tend to be exposed only to doctrines which will not challenge their social position and beliefs." A prudent minister scrupulously avoids that kind of challenge.

And Frightened Miss Muffet

These three lines of analysis which I have tried to summarize show Protestant groupness in operation. They give much credence to the idea that religion in America can be described sociologically as a function of class (groupness). What this means for Protestant churches facing the rigors of serving a dynamic metropolitan area is easily inferred. But we may spare ourselves the trouble of making inferences simply by quoting from Prof. Paul Douglass' exhaustive analysis of church life in St. Louis. He wrote some thirty-five years ago. Some important changes have taken place since then in our churches, our denominations, and our

(*Continued on page 17*)

[3] From "Euphoria in Suburbia," editorial by Waldo Beach in *Christianity and Crisis*, April 2, 1956.

SUMMER PROGRAM ARTICLES

By Samuel H. Miller

BUT FIND THE POINT AGAIN

You may not like what the dean of the Harvard Divinity School has to say in the following three program articles. You may even wonder why they appear in Crossroads at all, since they are addressed specifically to full-time, salaried, ordained ministers rather than to laymen.

These articles, however, are presented here for a specific reason: The people of the church, of each congregation, need to be clear about what they can legitimately expect their pastor to do. What is his task, after all? He cannot accomplish the work he is called to do, he cannot even retain his understanding of it consistently, unless he has the encouragement, support, co-operation, and understanding of an intelligent and committed congregation.

Reading the following three articles, you have an opportunity to listen to some seasoned and mature thinking, some disconcerting conclusions, and some impassioned convictions about your minister's tasks and what he must become in order to carry them out faithfully and fruitfully. Your pastor should read these articles; but you should read them too. They are adapted from an address delivered at the convocation service of the Harvard Divinity School on September 30, 1959. You may not completely agree with Dean Miller, but you and the pastor of your church need to know and ponder what he has said.

The Clumsy, Daring Word

When the climate of a culture changes, people are so preoccupied with their traditional habits and ways of looking at things that they do not see what is happening before their eyes. Revolutions come and go, states and empires fall, miracles rise from the ruins, yet the people read their daily papers, eat and drink and sleep, suffer their sorrows, as if everything remained the same. The new age coming into being rises unseen all about them while they go about their accustomed business.

Many religious people, perhaps because of their faith in an all-powerful God, tend to have an exaggerated indifference to the changing world. Thus the church,[1] to which they belong, may long deceive itself by its spectacular success in numbers and prestige, without knowing how hollow it has become or how feeble and unintelligible its message sounds to a world that has moved into new dimensions of knowledge and fear. Preachers may continue to talk of matters that have long since died and vanished everywhere except in the sacred vocabulary of the pulpit.[2] Ministers may exhaust themselves by the aggressive zeal of their diversified activities without touching the heart of darkness at the center of our troubled time.

Testy old Thomas Carlyle, in all his flamboyance, perceived this fact when he declared:

"That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men . . . is beautiful; even in its great obscuration and decadence, it is among the beautifulest, most touching objects one sees on the Earth. This Speaking Man has indeed, in these times, wandered terribly from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point: yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? Of all public functionaries boarded and lodged on the Industry of Modern Europe, is there one worthier of the board he has? . . . The Speaking Function, . . . with all our Writing and Printing functions, has a perennial place. Could he but find the point again . . . !" [3]

Worthy of his bed and board—*if he could but find the point again!* Age after age this speaking man had served well. According to the needs of previous epochs, he had stood in the teeth of the storm. Despite unpopularity or even martyrdom, he had not wavered from the point or betrayed the nature of his leadership. Think of the apostles who fashioned the profound bases of Christian civilization. They sustained for centuries the life and culture of many peoples. Think of the priests who labored in many fields, in the arts and in philosophy during the Middle Ages. Carefully they perfected a world that reached its climax in majestic cathedral and all-encompassing creed. Or think of the Reformers who endured the ordeal of a radical revolution in the ways of faith and modes of action. They transformed the institutions of state and church in terms of new freedoms.

But Carlyle was describing the more recent preacher of a century ago. Where did his speaking man lose the point? Was he meandering, fiddling at inconsequentials? Was he blind, or stupid, or wicked? A world was in the making, as every epoch makes its world, and this man did not keep to his job. He strayed, and in his straying the bonds of faith were eventually loosed and the world fell apart.

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[1] "Certainly by every test but that of influence the church had never been stronger than it was at the opening of the twentieth century, and its strength increased steadily. Everyone was a Christian, and almost everyone joined some church, though few for reasons that would have earned them admission to Jonathan Edwards' Northampton congregation. The typical Protestant of the twentieth century inherited his religion as he did his politics, though rather more casually, and was quite unable to explain the differences between denominations. He found himself a church member by accident and persisted in his affiliation by habit; he greeted each recurring Sunday service with a sense of surprise and was persuaded that he conferred a benefit upon his rector and his community by participating in church services. The church was something to be 'supported' like some aged relative whose claim was vague but inescapable. . . .

"Never before had the church been materially more powerful or spiritually less effective." From *The American Mind*, by Henry Steele Commager. (© 1950 by Yale University Press. Used by permission.)

[2] "The great Biblical key ideas of sovereign divine creation, of covenant, election, sin, mercy, judgment, conversion, rebirth, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, Kingdom of God, are utterly alien, and consequently irrelevant, to people whose minds are molded and dominated by the conquest of the kingdom of man. They are undecipherable hieroglyphs, with which, strangely enough, church people still seem to play." From *The Communication of the Christian Faith*, by Hendrik Kraemer. (The Westminster Press. Copyright, 1956, by W. L. Jenkins.)

[3] From *Past and Present*, Book IV, Ch. 1.

Now you and I are standing in that man's shoes. We too have been called to minister to the world. Will we have anything to say, not merely to please the world, but to fit its real needs? Will we be able to find the point again, and thus provide a firm base for society? Will we be able to provide perspectives sufficient for the arts and culture? Will we be able to provide an intellectual integrity profound enough to discipline the destructive forces of our present chaos?

We are embarrassed to our very roots as we stand face to face with this world. Why? Because we find it all too easy to become relevant to the world's demands. We can easily conform to that standard which the world sets for us, and as easily lose the very point of being a minister in the world at all. One of the tragedies of our time is that we—the ministers of the church—are both overworked and unemployed. We are overworked in a multitude of tasks that do not have the slightest connection with religion and unemployed in the serious concerns and exacting labors that are absolutely necessary if we are to maintain a disciplined spiritual life among mature men and women.

I will describe for you a scandal of modern Protestantism. Young men are called to the *high venture* of the Christian way. They are disciplined by seminary training in the *arduous dimensions* of Christian faith. Then they are graduated into churches, where the magnitude of their vocation is, as Joseph Sittler has said,[4] *macerated,* chopped into small pieces, by the pressure of the petty practices of so-called parish progress.

One wonders how much of the compulsive frenzy of parish ministers comes from the guilty realization that they have not attended to their prime calling at all, but are merely filling up time with a nervous pandemonium of jerks and jabs in the direction of people to make the church popular. Wherever the current ideal of the minister comes from—the big operator, the smart salesman, the successful tycoon—it still remains a puzzle why ministers should fall prey to such false images unless they have completely confused what they are supposed to be doing with what most churches want them to do.

Herman Melville, as flamboyant a writer as Carlyle, yet with profound perceptions of what is involved in

[4] In "The Maceration of the Minister," in *The Christian Century,* June 10, 1959.

AMOS, *by C. Frederick Horbach*

"Do two walk together,
unless they have made an
appointment?
Does a lion roar in the forest,
when he has no prey?
Does a young lion cry out from
his den,
if he has taken nothing?
Does a bird fall in a snare on
the earth,
when there is no trap for it?
Does a snare spring up from
the ground,
when it has taken nothing?
Is a trumpet blown in a city,
and the people are not afraid?
Does evil befall a city,
unless the Lord has done it?
Surely the Lord God does nothing,
without revealing his secret
to his servants the prophets.
The lion has roared;
who will not fear?
The Lord God has spoken;
who can but prophesy?"
(*Amos 3:3-8*)

the minister's task, described the pulpit in the New Bedford Chapel where the one-time harpooner, Father Mapple, preached:

"The pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the world. From thence it is that the storm of God's quick wrath is first described, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is that the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow." [5]

This might easily have been accepted at face value in the early nineteenth century, but for us it would be easier to believe it was written tongue in cheek. The truth is that the pulpit, at least now, is certainly not the *prow* of this world, dividing new seas with its bold bow. The pulpit does not lead the world either in generating power or in initiating ideas. It is set back now in quieter waters, out of the haste and traffic where strife is real and decisions must be made.

The world is still a ship on its passage out. There is no doubt of that, nor that the voyage is incomplete. Indeed, we are more uncertain than Melville as to where we are going. Our charts seem obsolete in the light of new facts and forces. Therefore, we prove the unknown with a dread as terrifying as the dread the first man must have felt when he ventured out of sight of land under strange skies. Ministers no less than others have been overwhelmed by the catastrophic changes of history.

The Point of the Ministry

If we, as the speaking men of this age, are to find the magnitude and integrity of the ministry regained, we must look for its validity to be confirmed at a much more serious level of life than that of success

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and prestige. To succumb either to sentimental popularity or to institutional professionalism is to betray not only our own calling but the world's need as well. We find the meaning of our ministry confirmed or denied only in those crucial moments when the world is being made and unmade in the lives of those we are called to serve, when life turns into hell or opens into heaven, when—like Jacob of old—men and women are caught in the middle of the darkness, alone and in agony, wrestling with the unnamed mysteries of existence, striving to exact a blessing from the urgent demands of their human lot. Our ministry is validated in that moment when we dare to stand forth beyond the superficial safety of praise and the limits of blame, to speak the clumsy, daring word that only faith may speak. What word? It is the word that forewarns of future things unseen but darkly powerful, of realities waiting to be born at the far edge of all things known, of a realm mysterious with blessing for those who can become like little children, able to leap beyond themselves to a greatness dimly surmised.

That clumsy, daring word is the point we must find again. The word, which only faith can speak, gives the ministry its point, its tip of light that breaks the darkness like a sharpened spear, its bright moment when the diversity and contradictions of life break into a unity that is never complete and never permanent, but always redemptive and profoundly satisfying.

Yet any man who steps into this kind of pulpit, who stands up to speak the clumsy, daring word of faith in the prow where the storm strikes first and the dark is thickest, knows right well the terror of his position. A minister in any age is caught between the offense of God and the offense of the world. He is trapped between the awful terror of making God plain, of speaking the word of God, and the terrifying muddle of this world's jumbled circumstances in which human life is crucified. Like a lonely figure, the minister in our age stands separated from the confident assurance of any infallible or divine message easily inherited from the past. And he stands separated as well from the arrogance of an age that finds all authority in itself. He may stand at the prow, but not with the sustaining authority his forefathers found in their Bibles, creeds, and churches. The seething waters that break across his bow are from deeper seas than any man has ever sailed. J. Robert Oppenheimer has said:

"This is a world in which each of us, knowing his limitations, knowing the evils of superficiality and the terrors of fatigue, will have to cling to what is close to him, to what he knows, to what he can do, to his friends and his tradition and his love, lest he be dissolved in a universal confusion and know nothing and love nothing. . . .

"This balance, this perpetual, precarious, impossible balance between the infinitely open and the intimate, this time—our twentieth century—has been long in coming; but it has come. It is, I think, for us and our children, our only way. . . .

"This cannot be an easy life. We shall have a rugged time of it to keep our minds open and to keep them deep." [6]

Only the utmost honesty, perhaps the confession of our poverty, will enable us, as speaking men in this extremity, to prove ourselves skilled ministers worthy of our bed and board.

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[5] From *Moby Dick or The White Whale*, by Herman Melville.

[6] From "Prospects in the Arts and Sciences," in *Man's Right to Knowledge*, Second Series: Present Knowledge and New Directions, a radio symposium presented by Columbia University, December, 1954. Copyright, 1955, by Columbia University Press. Used by permission of the Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

THE VISION OF REALITY

To say the least, our situation is bewildering. The poet T. S. Eliot described it by saying that much of our heritage is Christian, but it is vastly less so than it used to be. The fact is that the whole fabric and structure of Christian truth, worked out and expressed in the mental representations of myth and symbol, has for the most part crumbled. Under the impact of the last three centuries of revolutionary thought, scientific methods, and historical studies, the Biblical vision of reality has evaporated. That vision no longer serves as the frame of reference for understanding and explaining the mysteries of being human. We have not deliberately renounced our Christian heritage, but it no longer plays a dynamic role. The Christian faith neither motivates our actions nor enables us to evaluate our satisfactions. We are no longer moved by the words that once thrust men to war or turned them from the world to God. The charts that have been used by men for centuries seem quite inadequate in the face of new conditions. The character of reality for human beings has changed, and the ancient vision is no longer sufficient.

Precisely at this point we must ask whether we shall labor to create a new Christian culture with materials coming from the new discoveries, disciplines, and attitudes of our time, or succumb to an essentially nonreligious, subpagan culture.[1]

Faith has always driven Christians to express their vision of reality in vital terms of ideas, stories, symbols, and rites that can help men hear and be grasped by the overtones and inferences of meaning in life. Such terms must be broad and suggestive enough to encourage men to exercise their human possibilities freely. If these expressions of faith are to function in this way, they cannot be reducible to precise, black-and-white, static literalisms. Such a symbolic structure of inspired imagination ties together the incompatibly different realities and forces of human existence. At the same time, the structure becomes a vocabulary—verbal, visual, and active—by which a community can be established and, under certain conditions, can rise to the level of communion.

Wherever this symbolic structure evaporates, loses its power of suggestion, becomes dogmatically rigid and then superficially literal, the people lose their means of sticking together. The ancient dictum is still true that, where there is no vision, the people perish. Where there is no commonly recognized portrayal of reality, society falls apart, and civilization and culture are thrown into anarchy and self-destruction. Lewis Mumford, in his Bampton Lectures, declared:

"Perhaps the fatal course all civilizations have so

[1] "The civilization characteristic of Christendom has not disappeared, yet another civilization has begun to take its place. . . . Our whole life and mind is saturated with the slow upward filtration of a new spirit—that of an emancipated, atheistic, international democracy." From *Winds of Doctrine*, by George Santayana. (Harper & Brothers. 1957.)

far followed has been due, not to natural miscarriages, the disastrous effects of famines and floods and diseases, but to accumulated perversions of the symbolic functions." [2]

New Images of Reality

Our disorders, I suspect, follow from the fact that the vision of reality that was conceived and worked out in terms of medieval theology by men like Dante and Aquinas is simply no longer a suggestive instrument for multitudes of people. The modern vision of life has been shaped and conditioned by the popular influences of science and industry. The minister, if he is to find the point at all and become useful to the rehabilitation of society and the redemption of the individual, cannot offer the twentieth century the image the thirteenth century found eminently satisfactory. The new age has a style of its own, a language peculiar to itself. Whatever image of reality is to be conjured up must be of the very substance of our time. On the other hand, the minister can scarcely believe that the twentieth century, unlike all others, has gone beyond the limitations of time and history so that it is sufficient to itself. A vision of reality limited only to our own epoch is incredibly arrogant and stupidly parochial. The golden-tongued Chrysostom put it well, as he put many things: "A priest must be sober and clear-eyed, with a thousand eyes in every direction."

People live and see their lives differently now from the way their ancestors did five hundred years ago. New ways of thinking have appeared as a result of the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of science. Each of these great movements has brought changes in Christendom's system of values and has created new perspectives of discrimination by which life is ordered. We have moved out of the age of magic into the age of science. We have reached a new maturity of freedom from superstition and credulity. With this "adulthood" has come an extraordinary

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activity and excitement in all the creative aspects of man's mind and spirit. New life is erupting in fresh but ambiguous forms needing identification and judgment. To evaluate such a burgeoning mass of new work is not easy, but clearly in the midst of it there is much that reflects or comes close to the ancient and traditional expressions of religious concern about the elemental mysteries of human existence.

Into the vacuum left by the slow evaporation of the Biblical image of reality, the burgeoning intellects of this age have understandably and desperately pushed their way. They have sought to formulate a new vision of reality more congenial to our contemporary sensibilities and knowledge. The arts have gone philosophical. Men like Beckmann, Klee, Picasso, and Henry Moore deliver their gnomic elucidations about the nature of reality with religious seriousness. The sciences, too, finding themselves on the brink of this same vacuum, have not always been slow to make a leap of faith concerning ultimate things. If the scientists themselves have modestly desisted, their friends have rushed in with cosmic conclusions. Even business, for all its pragmatic traditions and practical prejudices, has become quite confidently responsible and evangelical, urging upon men and their families the "business way of life."

What Can We Say Now?

Thus the minister must confront these twin terrors of the pulpit—at his back, what seems to be an obsolete order of things; before him, a confusion from which nothing is exempt. He stands for a whole collection of notions that have become mere words, the realities seemingly no longer a part of modern existence, and he must deal with a turbulent age that is doing its best to create a new order of intelligible meaning. Now that the Christian vision no longer reverberates in the life of contemporary mankind, how will the minister find the insight or the courage to proclaim "good news"? How will he rehabilitate the heights and depths of human sensibility that have atrophied in the recent frenzy of naturalizing the world? How will he show men the reality of life at levels from which they have long since withdrawn to busy themselves in other areas? How will he speak to the point, when men have nothing in their experience to provide the peg on which they might hang such realities as grace and spirit?

Can the minister be instrumental in supplying the modern world with a vision of reality? Can he offer the Bible to a people convinced that it has no validity? Can he recall heaven and hell to a people who have laughed them out of existence? Can he talk to them of God, when they find God quite unimaginable in such a world, scientifically structured in iron law? Can he explain faith, redemption, grace, while they wonder what such things have to do with the defense mechanisms of the ego or the libidinous expressions of the id? Can he continue to conduct the rites of the church and speak of "holy" things, when life itself has been naturalized and even the church transfers its own significance to statistical categories and popular prestige?

Sharing in this demythologized epoch, he may have no vision of reality to offer. But if there is no vision, there is no preacher, no message, no church. He cannot peddle Dante or Thomas, Luther or Calvin, as if nothing had happened in the world since their time. As Kierkegaard so succinctly put it, one cannot crib the answers to the problems of the age from the back of the book.

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[2] From *Art and Technics*, by Lewis Mumford. Copyright, 1952, by Columbia University Press.

A Learned Ministry

If ever the conditions of the world demanded the highest and most rigorous intellectual preparation for the ministry, they do so now. The founders of America's early universities were profoundly convinced that no well-ordered society could long endure without a "learned ministry." Well into the eighteenth century this passionate conviction continued to be expressed, until the twin forces of pietism and romanticism began to dull the edge of all discipline in American life. Slackness, emotionalism, and a fever of optimism spread through the church and corrupted its ways. There was a general leveling down of all classes—in the name of democracy—and a revolt against all theological thoroughness—in the name of simplicity and practical concerns. By and large, it was a loose vulgarization of the Christian faith, which, by the early twentieth century, had transformed the ministry into a shadow of the moral enthusiasms and respectability of the secular world.

We need again to assert the fundamental necessity for a learned ministry, if the church is to survive as a potent source of that vision by which society unites its life in a meaningful order of truth and goodness. The church's present tactics are scarcely more than an effort to keep its body alive by repudiating its soul.

Only by dint of the severest intellectual discipline may a man provide a vision of reality for such an age as this. If that vision is the Christian tradition, he must discover how to unwrap it, reveal its dynamic suggestiveness, make plain its elucidation of the human problem. If it is not in the Christian tradition, he must discover where it is and what it is. In all, he must be able to make wise and revealing judgments, not confusing truth with novelty or tradition with truth, but discerning the distinctions between appearance and reality, between the authentic and the popular.

To attain the intellectual acumen to be wise in the present about the living past, to be able to confirm the eternal in the temporal, and to see sharply the difference between sophisticated skepticism and skeptical faith is an order of considerable magnitude. It is certainly no job for an ecclesiastical mechanic or a general manager of parish programs. The radical thrust of this work is in the direction of the profoundest perceptiveness, imagination, rational daring, and penetrating insight.

Alchemy of Conscious Thought

As in other professions, and nowhere more disastrously, American practicality has contrived short cuts in the training of ministers. Concerned only with shortsighted results, it has reduced theological education to a vulgarized form of trade school, where facile schemes, glib formulas, and manipulative methods prepare a man for the disillusionment and heartsickening bitterness he must endure when he discovers all too late that such bright and shining stones are no food for the hunger of honest men and women, touched by this world's tragic pain.

If there is to be a vision of reality, if the minister really desires to "find the point again" and to be worthy of his board, he can do it only by probing the Bible to its deepest ground, exploring the wide reaches of faith in its historical elaboration, and articulating, as explicitly as his imagination and reason allow, the theological structure of human relationships and circumstantial mysteries. Certainly no portion of the minister's intellectual ability can be left undeveloped. A great deal of nonsense has been uttered in this regard, especially in pietistic circles supported by a native American anti-intellectualism. The attainment of the saints has been praised as if it were achieved either without assistance from or in spite of their intelligence. Neither history nor biography corroborate such an illusion. A softheaded saint is simply no saint. Although the saints may not have been scholars, their intelligence was undeniable. One can scarcely fulfill the love of God in Jesus' prime commandment by avoiding the passionate expression of the "whole mind." Let the minister be sure his mind is sharpened to its utmost, lest he blunder about the world with a rough and stupid carelessness, hoping that he may hit upon the will of God merely because of his good intentions.

The minister has a job cut from monumental dimensions that thrusts him beyond all normal limits of his resources. He must probe the past till he finds the quick of it—and knows beyond the peradventure of a doubt the broad and everlasting realities in it that run like a living stream into our own day. He must probe

the present, suffer the full brunt of its tumultous power and passion, separating with painful threshing the wheat from the chaff in his own mind and heart. He must take the Bible, a very old book fashioned in archaic languages and forms, and unveil the present intimacy of its radical realities. He must handle the mixed and perplexing chaos of mortal circumstance, the old and the new, the great and the inconsequential, the sacred and the profane, and, by an alchemy of his own, he must make sense of things or be honest and humble in knowing he can do no more than face them wisely and bravely. He must learn to see the primordial truth in small events, the sublime in common, unexpected places, the glory of grace in humble persons,

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the son of God in a "litter of scorn." Everywhere he must have eyes to see what mortal eyes too often miss and the intelligence both to look for it and to confirm it when it is found.

When André Malraux, the novelist, has one of his characters ask, "How can one make the best of one's life?" the answer is given, "By converting as wide a range of experience into conscious thought as possible." In a sense, this is the function of the minister, especially if we keep in mind the tremendous scope of "experience" and the conflicting forces of history that produce it. By the use of his intelligence, the minister not only turns experience into conscious thought, but he also seeks to make sense out of the diversity and incompleteness of experience. It is his task to bring experience to conscious fulfillment and to articulate that fulfillment in terms of an ultimate whole. The vision of reality is seen in small events and single revelations; it becomes the symbol of the total way of life in which all things work together for good to them that love God. The minister will sadly know how true it is, as Proust once said, that most lives are like camera film, exposed to passing events, but never developed. It is the joy and anguish of the minister to "develop" the experience of men to a vision of reality.

I should like to risk the privilege of using some words of Albert Camus, spoken when he received the Nobel Prize, as a thrust of light in this direction. Although he is speaking of art, I should like to substitute our own thoughts of religion.

"To me art is not a solitary delight. It is a means of stirring the greatest number of men by providing them with a privileged image of our common joys and woes. Hence it forces the artist [minister] not to isolate himself; it subjects him to the humblest and most universal truth. . . .

"No one of us is great enough for such a vocation. . . . Whatever our personal frailties may be, the nobility of our calling will always be rooted in two commitments difficult to observe: refusal to lie about what we know and resistance to oppression. . . . Faced with a world threatened with disintegration, in which our grand inquisitors may set up once and for all the kingdoms of death, [this] generation knows that, in a sort of mad race against time, it ought to re-establish among nations a peace not based on slavery, to reconcile labor and culture again, and to reconstruct with all men an Ark of the Covenant." [1]

"To reconstruct with all men an Ark of the Covenant"! To bind together in one household the humanity of our time! To recover the ground of truth on which we all must stand and the vision of hope in which freedom may be boldly exercised! To lift up our eyes to that higher dream in which the exuberance of our epoch may become, not a haunted nightmare or a burden of despair, but a song of joy and peace for all people! This is a calling beyond our strength, and yet nothing less than such a kingdom could demand or deserve our all. Not in our strength, not in our wisdom, but in the power of that which waits to be born, in the new Ark of the Covenant, we stake our faith.

The Scope of Theological Training

To train men for such a profession has never been an easy task. In our day an educated man may pass as such by having a wide smattering of slight contacts, innumerable opinions, and a name-dropping vocabulary. Sometimes theological education has contented itself with informing men with more than they can think and encouraging a kind of lust for knowledge that accumulates a body of inert ideas in lieu of wisdom. Certainly if we can keep in mind that Ark of the Covenant for which Camus is striving out of motives far removed from the Christian faith, we too shall know that there is something greater than our particular art or our special skill. The fragmentation of the world is mirrored in our divisive authorities. Our vocabularies tend to become departmental or even private. The paths of communication and of possible unity become clogged with protective devices and defensive barriers for our private satisfaction. The ramifying walls that separate so much of our learning into seemingly watertight compartments are not in life. We make them ourselves, sometimes for our convenience, often for our prestige; but we must find a way to breach them if we are to train men to love God with their whole mind.[2]

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[1] From "Camus at Stockholm: The Acceptance of the Nobel Prize." Translated by Justin O'Brien. Copyright, 1958, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Used by permission.

[2] "The doctor, the teacher, the administrator, the judge, the clergyman, the architect, are each in his own way professionally concerned with man as a whole, and the conditions of human life as a whole. Preparation for these professions is unthinking and inhuman if it fails to relate us to the whole." From *The Idea of the University*, by Karl Jaspers. (Edited by Karl W. Deutsch; translated by H. A. T. Reiche and H. F. Vanderschmidt. © 1959 by The Beacon Press, Inc.)

A learned ministry is not necessarily pedantic. Indeed, a minister is in many respects a disciplined amateur. He is amateur because he works forever at the edge of unprecedented possibilities in the freedom by which the Spirit fulfills events and needs. He is amateur because he is concerned with everything human across the entire spectrum of sensibility, from feeling to idea to action. He is amateur because he is the lover of this world, intent on fulfilling its deepest and most radical reality through its diversified institutions and cultures.

As amateur, he will want to draw together insight and perception from every corner of time and space. He will meditate day and night on those primordial myths in which the experience of multitudes was strained, concentrated, and objectified in archaic figures and forms. He will read the long and troubled contours of the past, the profound penetrations of prophet and priest, the dreams and corruption and heroism of the church, the anguish of centuries and the hope of eternity. To know, to know accurately and deeply, to respect the fullness of our inheritance, to explore it humbly and expectantly for its peculiar gift to the wisdom of the ages so that it can open to us the deeper levels of present existence, requires intelligence of the most disciplined sort, but not pedantry.

Every profession of our time increasingly demands a skill of theoretical knowledge and practical application; and the ministry, no less than any other, must be a disciplined profession. By and large, we are not so at present. We have bartered our professional birthright—an honored place in the economy of a community—by reducing our office to a mad dervish dance of unenlightened public activities. Our duty is still an intellectual one in the highest sense of that term.

I will not say that you cannot be ordained as a minister without some vision of reality by which human experience can be elucidated, its heights and depths articulated, and its risk of waste redeemed for meaning and joy. I will not say that you cannot serve the church in many different ways without such a scheme of measurement and discernment. I will not say that you cannot help people in many of their crises when the spirit despairs and life grows dark. But I will say that, if you enter the ministry and hope to stand in the pulpit as in the prow of the world, in the foremost part where directions are discerned and determined, if you expect to serve the real needs and not the apparent ones of the time in which you live, if you are going to find the point again where the ministry can be validated as a profession competently intent on doing its own job, then you must find a way to pull life together into a frame of reference or in a vision of reality so that men will know the dignity of belonging to this vast venture under God.

Only by stretching ourselves to the utmost, by submitting both to the discipline of training and to the conditions of the time under which we work, shall we prepare ourselves to make meaning out of the cataclysms of history or the humble events of human experience. Until we find the point again and stand by it boldly and intelligently, the pulpit will be no more than an easy refuge from the strife and pain of life. But if we find the point again, if the vision is restored and the word is spoken for which every age waits, then no man will claim our place.

MISS MUFFET GOES TO CHURCH

(*Continued from page 8*)

agencies for co-operative effort in the metropolitan area; yet I am persuaded that the picture Professor Douglass saw in 1924 is, in essential details, the picture we are seeing today. Here is what he wrote:

"Protestantism started [in St. Louis] as a very complete cross-section of the entire community. It has continued to be thus by keeping within the ruts in which it started. There are Protestant churches of the poor, of the middle classes, and of the rich, because Protestantism started that way. Protestantism continues to operate selectively on all social levels.

"In any given locality the existing Protestant churches do not easily reach even new-coming Protestant people if they differ in any considerable degree from the types already found in the churches. They tend, therefore, to move away when their old constituencies move, if the newcomers are not of the same faith and social status as well. . . . The newcomers have brought their own type of churches to take the place of the departing ones.

"These churches are smaller and poorer and belong to denominations not so well established . . . as the migrating ones. From this standpoint the quality of religious ministry afforded the less-fortunate sections of the city is very disproportionate to their need. It is not churches which they lack, but good churches."[1]

The One Focal Obligation

It is now time to move in the direction of a conclusion and, if possible, to forestall the criticism that we have been straining at the painfully obvious. An evaluation of Protestant groupness is inevitable and is being made already from different points of view. There are Marxists who are saying:

"I told you so! The churches are nothing but blinds that conceal the forces of class domination. Away with them! Let's get on to the classless society!"

There are Roman Catholic observers who also are saying, "I told you so!" but for somewhat different reasons:

"You Protestants brought chaos and hypocrisy into civilization when you substituted the corrupt freedom of the individual believer for the unifying authority of Rome. Rejoin us as we reinstate the thirteenth-century ideal of one true church visibly dominating the city and its inhabitants."

There are also a good many satisfied Protestants who can look at the manifest groupness of their churches and say:

"What's wrong with that? 'Preach the gospel to every creature' is a nice ideal, but it isn't realistic. 'Birds of a feather flock together!' When you can stop the birds from doing that, maybe you can change the churches. But meanwhile, don't meddle. You had better take people as they are and let them have the kind of churches they want."

For myself—and since there is no clear-cut Protestant ideal to follow in these matters, I must say *for myself*—I reject all three of these evaluations. But they can only be proved wrong by Protestant churches whose members accept Christ's command to "preach the gospel to every creature" as an obligation not to be trifled with. In that event, the churches may gradually be able to modify groupness into virtual insignificance.

Protestant groupness, as we find it, is an evil that is robbing the church of its moral and spiritual effectiveness. H. Richard Niebuhr, in his disturbing classic, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*,[4] suggests where the evil of groupness lies:

"[It lies] in the failure of the churches to transcend the social conditions which fashion them into caste organizations, to sublimate their loyalties to standards and institutions only remotely relevant if not contrary to the Christian ideal, to resist the temptation of making their own self-preservation and extension the primary object of their endeavor."

Protestant churches, confronted with the changing city, have purchased a temporary success in the past and can continue to purchase it in the future by fostering groupness through days of prosperity and by following hard after it in days of adversity. But the ledger will not be fairly balanced until the accompanying losses of this policy have been added up and set painfully in view beside the vaunted gains.

One loss is the withdrawal of individuals from church membership—the lapsed and the unreached. It would be eye-opening if someone could devise a way of finding out how many people have developed an immunity to the church by sojourning within or near a Protestant institution whose gospel has been diluted by the groupness of its ministry and membership.

A second loss to be considered is the church's inability to influence the broad moral and spiritual issues that are constantly engulfing a city and its welter of neighborhoods. When churches have long been oriented to serving the needs and interests of exclusive groups, is it any wonder that they are not listened to when they speak with conflicting voices on issues that affect all groups equally? And is there anything sadder than the spectacle of churches—meant to be redemptively in the world but not of it—demonstrating all too often that they are of the world but not in it when it comes to pointing a way beyond misunderstanding and strife toward reconciliation and community?

A third loss to be set over against the gains of Protestant groupness is perhaps the most serious of all: the loss of Christian integrity. If a man rejects a church's ministry and excludes himself from its influence, that is one kind of failure—and a most serious failure it may be. When a church rejects a man in advance because he is not the sort of man the church is used to or because he is not likely to preserve the church's established groupness, this is a more radical kind of failure. It involves many in disobedience to a charter obligation laid down by Christ for his church, which is to "preach the gospel to every creature." The refusal to be ecumenical *intensively*—that is, the refusal to recognize in a congregation that *all* are truly welcome—makes a mockery of a church's life, even though it may be working hard and with conspicuous results at being ecumenical *extensively* among the various churches of the community.

Are there any alternatives to the exclusive groupness that seems to be in control of many Protestant churches? My conviction is that there are. They will not be easy to work out, for they will evidently involve a fuller measure of co-operative planning, financing, and ministering than our churches are used to. But these alternatives must start with a sound theological understanding of Christ's intention for his church, constantly illuminated and enlarged by worship in the several Christian traditions. And these alternatives may need to be developed into co-operative institutional arrangements that would require every church to practice ecumenical Christianity primarily in its own neighborhood, giving all due honor to other churches and other traditions, sharing with them the burdens of evangelism, Christian education, and pastoral ministry, and all the while giving as little room as possible to groupness. At all times the Christ-given obligation will need to be kept focal—by all means to "proclaim the gospel to every creature."

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[4] The Shoe String Press, 1954. Copyright, 1929, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

NOTES *for Program Planning*

THE three program articles in this issue of CROSSROADS are actually three parts of a single address delivered by the dean of the Harvard Divinity School to the students of that institution preparing for the ministry or doing postgraduate work. It was aimed at ministers and candidates for the ministry. In the introduction on page 9 we stated our reason for presenting the address in CROSSROADS.

What, then, must the planning committee of your group do to utilize these articles as background resources for three programs? The committee members should consider taking four significant steps: basic study of the subject, choice of topics to be brought before the group, development of each presentation, and preparation of the group so that they will be ready to participate intelligently in the programs.

Basic Study

The planning committee assigned to work out these three programs will find it useful to do some solid reading before jumping into the actual task of planning the presentations. The committee members should perhaps consider the program articles of primary significance in this task, reading all three completely, and taking note of the parts of Dr. Miller's address that are controversial, obscure, or difficult to understand.

If possible, read also Joseph Sittler's article, "The Maceration of the Minister," in the June 10, 1959, issue of *The Christian Century,* which may be obtainable from the local public library. This article discusses the effect of pointless parish busyness on the integrity of the pastor's calling.

Two very excellent books, published last year by The Westminster Press, will also be found extremely useful as the committee members think through the subject: *Agents of Reconciliation,* by Arnold B. Come ($3.95), and *The Rebirth of Ministry,* by James D. Smart ($3.50). These are thought-provoking, challenging, and thoroughly stimulating discussions of what the church's ministry—that of both clergy and laity—ought to be in this age.

Another useful resource for background study is the April–June, 1960, issue of CROSSROADS. In that issue, the *Christian Faith and Life* articles include Unit IV, "The Living Word in the Modern Church," by M. Holmes Hartshorne, and Unit V, "The Modern Christian in the Modern Church," by John R. Fry.

Your pastor will also be able to recommend basic study materials for the use of the planning committee members. Also—it is almost too obvious to mention—he is himself a very significant living study resource, if you treat him well, and if he does not mind too greatly being stared at and examined. He is Exhibit A. In any case, he should work closely and personally with the planning committee.

Again it should be emphasized that the people planning programs that utilize the three articles must do basic study on their own before they can expect to do their work effectively or intelligently. Only after they are satisfied that they have a reasonable understanding of the resources, and after they have discussed the subject together to clarify some of their confusions, will they be ready to proceed.

Doing the Planning

Several tasks remain to be done. For one thing, the committee should decide, on the basis of their study, what objectives they hope the group will be able to reach as a result of the programs. Following the general ground plan of the articles, they might conclude, for example, that the goals are: (1) to come to a better understanding of the church's current quiet-water irrelevance; (2) to see the need for a Biblical vision of reality that can be understood by people living in 1961; and (3) to clarify the group's understanding of the task to which their pastor is called and of their own task as they work with him in the church's ministry to the world. Or they might focus more directly on the pastor's ministry: (1) the pastor's integrity, (2) the pastor's vision or message, and (3) the pastor's continuing preparation. These, of course, are not meant as focal points by which the group can sit in judgment on your pastor's performance. They are meant as focal points by which the group can see the predicament in which a pastor is caught when he tries to minister faithfully to people who don't know what he has been called to do in Christ's name.

Secondly, having outlined the objectives of the programs, the planning committee must consider various ways of presenting their concerns to the group as a whole. Shall it be through discussion, lecture, panel, debate, symposium, role-playing, work projects, or some other device? The committee should exercise their corporate imagination freely before coming to a decision.

Thirdly, the committee should plan to prepare the group ahead of time so that when the meetings begin the people will not arrive unaware of the subjects to be presented. This means a certain amount of publicity, some stimulating questions, some good program titles that will reveal something of the importance and substance of the presentations.

christian faith and life articles

Three Summer Units

Unit I—The Shaping of American Presbyterianism

By Elwyn A. Smith

Professor of Church History, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

THE perplexing problems that Presbyterians face today are not entirely new and without precedent in American history. Earlier generations of Presbyterians also struggled with them. In the five articles that follow, Professor Smith seeks to provide historical perspectives from which to view contemporary problems of the church. The titles of the articles indicate the specific problems to be considered: "Why Denominations?" "Presbyterians and Negroes," "Presbyterians Are Conservative!" "The Coming of World Christianity," and "Presbyterians and the City." The articles deal primarily with the church's approach to these questions during the period of American history that ended about the time of the First World War. Recent developments in the church's approach to social issues, world mission, and ministry to the inner city have not been dealt with in detail; within the scope of five short articles such comprehensive treatment is not possible. The dilemmas facing the church in 1961, however, will be seen more clearly as their roots in the actions and decisions of earlier Presbyterians are laid bare.

1

WHY DENOMINATIONS?

Read *Matt. 20: 17-28.*

AMONG the confusing words in the American vocabulary, "church" stands somewhere near the top. It means a building; it is a congregation; and it is also a world-wide organization as, for example, the Roman Catholic Church. It has another even more comprehensive meaning: all persons, living, dead, or yet unborn, who at any time receive Christ as Savior and Lord. This is sometimes called the "invisible" church, although obviously not everyone in it is invisible.

If that were not enough, a whole range of organizations call themselves churches: The United Presbyterian Church, The Methodist Church, the Church of God—the newest *Yearbook of American Churches* counts a total of 254 "churches."

We have another word for these organizations: "denominations," which means "names." The only other familiar use of the word "denomination" has to do with paper currency. We speak of bills of various "denominations,"—fives, tens, twenties, and larger ones that most of us never see. These bills stand for something more valuable than paper. They declare that the United States Government will surrender something of inherent value, silver, whenever the man with the bill demands it. A "denomination," in short, has value, not of itself, but because it is a name for something from which it gets its meaning.

So it is with American "denominations." It is worth noting that denominations are designated by adjectives, such as Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist. The tragedy of American Christianity is not that it is split into many denominations—among so many people, there must be subordinate groups of some kind—

but that some of these "churches" believe that they can be true churches *apart from* other believers. A true denomination knows it is only a particular name for the church.

Not a Splinter but a Branch

What this means for the "Presbyterian Church" is very important. We are rightly called "church" because we are among those who acknowledge and obey Christ as Lord and Savior. But we are only one element of the whole church: the "Presbyterian" part of it. Like the Episcopalians, we are denominated by the particular way in which we govern ourselves, to which must be added the customs of thought and conduct that have long prevailed among us. Other denominational adjectives refer to methods of piety (Methodist), prominent teachings (Seventh Day Adventists), or eminent leaders (Lutherans). But true denominations never deny that they are only a part of the church.

To many people, the word "denomination" stands for internal division. Actually, the word bespeaks unity, for a true denomination enters into relationships with other Christian church bodies and, in so doing, acknowledges that it is a part of the total church. On the other hand, there are large and influential groups of churches in the United States that deny they are denominations at all and insist that they are *the* church. Thus, enormous groups of Protestant Christians refuse to co-operate with organizations that enable denominations to be more truly the church: the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Council of Churches, and other bodies bringing Christians of different names into churchly unity.

Those who travel abroad observe that in some countries there are churches but no denominations. In England there are some denominations in the American sense, but not in Switzerland, Sweden, or Germany. In these and in some other countries there are state churches: the law has decided for one "church," and this church either theoretically (as with the Church of England) or actually includes everybody. In certain Swiss cantons, for example, every newborn citizen must be baptized in the state Reformed Church, whether he ever worships there as an adult or not. "State-church" countries have other religious groups, such as Baptists, Roman Catholics, and Pentecostalists, but these groups do not consider themselves denominations. The Roman Catholic Church is very explicit in its belief that it is the only true church and all non-Roman state churches are wholly wrong. In Europe, groups of Baptists or Pentecostalists are regarded as sects rather than denominations, and, like the Roman Catholic Church, they often claim to be the only true church.

How did American Christians arrive at their characteristic way of organizing the church in denominations? This calls for a bit of history—and to those who were bored by history in school we can only say that *this* time your history lesson aims to help you understand why you and your church act and think the way you do.

Conflict and Organization

Before the Revolutionary War, there were many Congregational churches in New England; Presbyterian churches were concentrated in the colonies between Connecticut and Virginia; and in Virginia the Episcopal church was strong. Other groups of European origin were scattered and fewer in number: German Lutherans, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and others. There were almost no Roman Catholics, even in Maryland, which had been founded by the Catholic Lord Baltimore.

Colonial "churches" were not organized as churches are now; they were movements rather than denominations. The unity of Presbyterians consisted basically in their agreement on Calvinist doctrine, similar ways of governing local churches and regional bodies, and general agreement on practices of baptism, ordination, and worship. There were no boards, and the "general assembly" of the time, called the "Synod of New York and Philadelphia," did not meet to consider reports and plans of the church's executive staff—which did not exist. It met to adjudicate disputes, adopt church regulations, and deal with issues such as the danger Presbyterians felt from the Church of England, the approaching rebellion against England, and slavery.

Then came the national Constitution. It seems bizarre now, but fear that Presbyterians might try to make themselves the state church of the new nation was so great that the General Assembly announced publicly that it had no such designs. Of course, separation of church and state ruled out the European way of organizing the church.

Presbyterians and other Protestants might have gone on indefinitely as they were had not the great increase of the population through immigration and the fecundity of native-born Americans started a vast Westward movement. By 1800 it was obvious that the church could not provide ministers and churches to settlers in western New York state, the Alleghenies, Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky without a special effort. In order to recruit, train, and send missionary ministers west, great societies were organized, first in New England under Congregational auspices with Presbyterian support, and then under the authority of the General Assembly. In 1816, our earliest Board of Missions was established. This was later subdivided into the Board of Foreign Missions (1837) and what we now call National Missions, for the American interior. Various agencies, most of them now united in the Board of Christian Education, were organized to assist candidates for the ministry, and the seminaries were founded—Service (now Pittsburgh) in 1794; Princeton in 1812; Western in 1825—so that by 1853, when Louisville was established, a nationwide system of education for the ministry existed.

During this period of national change Presbyterianism became more than a movement headed by the General Assembly. It emerged as a great organization in the modern sense, designed for action as well as adjudication. The development brought serious conflict both within the Presbyterian body and between Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians with whom they had worked intimately for many generations, such as the Congregationalists. Conflict as well as organization, therefore, shaped the spirit of the modern Presbyterian "denomination." The result was that an executive branch was added to a church that had previously possessed only legislative and judicial instruments.

Had our church not organized for action in the West, Presbyterianism would now be localized on the Eastern seaboard between New York and Charleston. Presbyterians arriving from Scotland or moving to the frontier from Pennsylvania would have been swept into Methodist and Baptist congregations by revivalism. Both these groups came swiftly to the fore in this era of national expansion. Until 1800 Presbyterians made up the largest and most influential church body. In size they were passed by both Methodists and Baptists by 1840, and their influence in American society now is not materially greater than that of Lutherans, Episcopalians, or other groups of comparable education and social status.

The Organizational Peril

Denominations, thus, have developed in natural response to the necessities of American social history, out of older movements imported from Europe. They really belong; they are not contrived. Denominations are a form of church life well suited to American conditions. In America, they perform a service to the Christian faith that in Europe falls to the state churches: they are a kind of middle ground between faith without organization and the highly organized way in which Americans live and work. Denominations are one of the things Christians do about their faith in Christ. When they function as they ought, they express a love between brethren that is a gift of Christ himself.

At the same time, denominational church life is in constant danger of doing exactly the opposite: destroying the fellowship Christ has established among his disciples. Denominations are voluntary gatherings of people who, in addition to having chosen Christ as Lord, choose one another as associates. But our choice of friends often does not correspond to Christ's choice of disciples. He has chosen men of every race and language to compose the church; we choose our friends on grounds of taste and prejudice as well as faith. Although the denomination is in itself a legitimate expression of the church, it is at the same time captive to much that is hostile to the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

As they now exist, denominations borrow a great deal from the typically American way of doing business. The much-discussed organization man fits very well into the modern church. In fact, denominations produce their own kind of ecclesiastical organization man. This is obviously not all bad; democratic relationships seem to be inherent in the Christian conception of work, despite the long grip of authoritarianism in church life. Yet if Christ is Lord, he may well choose means of speaking to us that do not fit our pattern. Denominationalism, in short, has no right to rule the prophet out of God's community. Pure American organizationalism is hostile to individual thought, speech, and action; it demands that its members submerge mind and self in group life. The mission movement owed its beginnings to the stubborn individualism of men like William Carey, who argued for missions against the inertia of the Protestants in Britain. Likewise, the enterprising Sheldon Jackson seldom waited for confirmation of his plans by his Board of Missions. He performed what he saw needed to be done.

Denominational church life ought to differ significantly, therefore, from other American organizations. Take, for example, the way all organizations must give an accounting of themselves. The ponderous march of an unprogressive business organization toward bankruptcy becomes dramatically plain in the red ink on the ledger. Government bureaus face congressional investigation; nonprofit organizations lose public support if they absorb too much giving in overhead. The church has its own unique check: the Word of God—usually spoken, not by committees on reorganization, but by individuals who may create temporary disharmony. A denomination—which is to say, a highly organized subdivision of the church—must make specific provision for God's controversy with his own people as well as his blessing.

Modern denominationalism has given a precious heritage to the nation as a whole. Boards of mission and education and institutions of higher learning have been established and supported financially by Christians. There is a more subtle heritage, however—one involving ideas. The organizational structure of business, education, and government has yielded at certain points to the Christian norms of service, concern for the individual, and commitment to the common good. One would also have to concede that the functioning of large denominations reveals unmistakable signs of secular and business influence. Nevertheless, Christians in every age, irrespective of the particular form of church life they observe, have proclaimed their ultimate loyalty to Christ. There arises in every age, therefore, a clash in the realm of ethics between the necessities of large organizations and the calling to minister as Christ ministered, to be the servant of all men. This clash is very real. In any organization the exercise of authority would seem to be an absolute necessity; this means hiring, firing, and controlling the organization. How sharply the words of Jesus stand in contrast to the ways of organizational life: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great

among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (*Matt. 20: 25-28*).

Denominational church life probably does not pose any greater difficulties than the old state church of Europe. Christian history has had far more experience with state churches, whereas we are only beginning to discover how to adapt denominationalism to the service of Christ. This is not a task of church administrators alone. The clearest penetration of the problem of how to make organization serve the purposes of Christ for the church may come from thoughtful laymen who have reflected on their experience of organizational life in business and government as well as in the church and have applied their insights to the church.

UNIT I

2

PRESBYTERIANS AND NEGROES

Read *Luke 10: 23-37; James 2: 1-13.*

THE first Negroes to arrive in British North America were put ashore at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, by a Dutch slave ship. They were purchased by tobacco planters, and slavery developed so rapidly that by 1790, the date of the first American census, there were 697,681 slaves in the newly formed nation. On the eve of the Civil War (1860) there were 3,953,760 slaves and 488,070 free Negroes in the United States.

Who may properly be called "Presbyterians" is a moot question. Strictly speaking, there could be no American Presbyterians until the founding of the Presbyterian Church in 1706. But among the Puritans who came to New England in the seventeenth century were many who had been touched by English Presbyterianism, which reached its summit in the 1640's. Most of these New Englanders abhorred the plan of England's Presbyterians to establish a state Presbyterian Church that would suppress Independency and Separatism. But they approved the Westminster Confession and much else that was done at Westminster. American Congregationalism and Presbyterianism were intermixed from the start.

Slavery Was Sectional

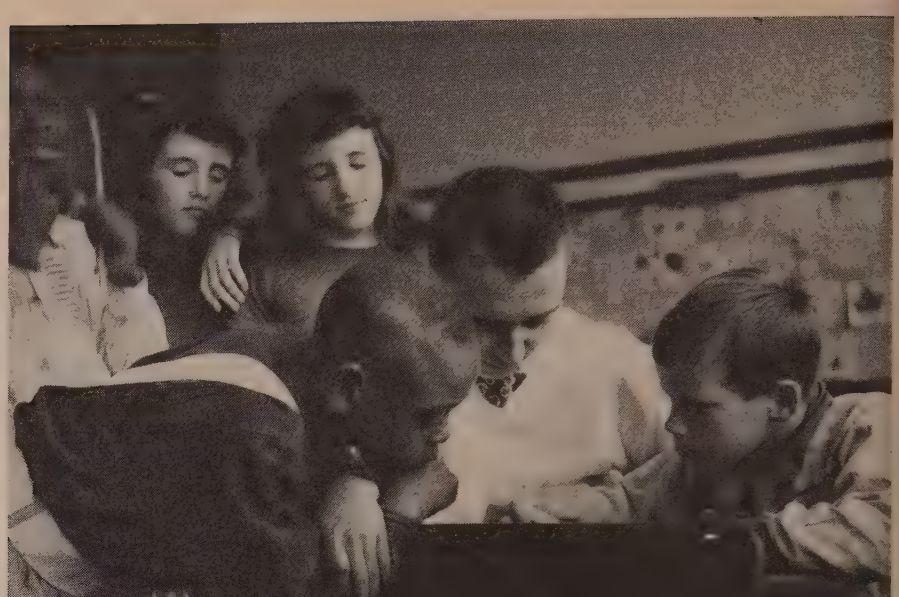
New England found little use for slaves and its states were among the first to pass laws forbidding slavery. Many Negroes were sold and transported to areas where it was permitted; some were liberated. The South was settled in two waves, the second largely Presbyterian in background. The first came by sea and appropriated the level lands between the coast and the first sharp falls in the rivers that arose in the mountains. This land was adapted to large-scale plantation agriculture and it was here that slavery flourished to its bitter end. These territories were occupied principally by settlers of English extraction who created a chivalrous culture that has been sung, storied, and exaggerated in works such as *Gone with the Wind*. Here the Church of England (which became the Protestant Episcopal Church) dominated the religious scene.

From its founding Virginia produced public-minded families whose wealth was based on land and slaves. At the time of the Civil War this class won the support of the poorer folk of the south, except for a few regions where political division occurred: West Virginia broke away; and efforts were made in mountainous East Tennessee to establish the independent state of Franklin. The Southern back country had been settled, beginning about 1740, by land-hungry Scots pressing through the great intermountain valleys from Pennsylvania into the foothills of the Carolinas and Georgia. These people worked their own land and few ever owned more than a single slave, at most a family. Those who had not been cut away from their rootage by emigration and the disorganization of life on the frontier were Presbyterian. Plantation manners and economics were no part of their experience, and to this day there are marked differences between the small landholders of the piedmont and the people of the flatlands.

It is impossible to discover how many slaves were owned by Presbyterians, but as the spirit of sectionalism seized the nation after 1830, the question of possession of slaves became secondary. Southerners felt their own liberties threatened by abolitionism, congressional enactments, and charges of immorality that came with ill grace from the offspring of a New England grown rich by trade in molasses, rum, and slaves. Presbyterian clergymen were prominent in the South in this era. Benjamin M. Palmer, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans at the height of his career, wrote and preached in defense of slavery. James Henley Thornwell, president of the College of South Carolina and later a professor at the Columbia Theological Seminary, argued that slavery was instituted in the providence of God and should be defended against unbelieving agitators who denied the peculiar calling of Christian slaveholders.

Protests

Although the American Quakers were among the first to question slavery and forbid it among their members, in 1774, James Pemberton, a clergyman, and Benjamin Rush, a physician, both Presbyterians,



On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States declared that segregated public education is unconstitutional. "Abandonment of barriers to church fellowship based on race . . . has not yet greatly advanced."

founded the first antislavery society. In 1787 Benjamin Franklin became its president. By 1827 there were at least 106 antislavery societies in the *South,* more than four times the number in the North. A strong document was adopted by the General Assembly in 1818 condemning slavery and admonishing Presbyterians "to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible, throughout the world." The Assembly urged that immediate measures be taken to prepare Negroes for the responsibilities of freedom and, meanwhile, to support the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States for resettling free Negroes in Liberia. This plan seemed to offer a middle way between support of slavery and general emancipation, but the flow of Negroes out of the United States never overtook the regular increase in their numbers.

Meanwhile, the Assembly urged that "all the members of our religious denomination . . . facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves, in the principles and duties of the Christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the gospel . . . ; by favoring the instruction of them in Sabbath-Schools, wherever those schools can be formed . . . . We enjoin it on all church sessions and presbyteries . . . to discountenance and . . . to prevent all cruelty of whatever kind in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and children, and that which consists in selling slaves to those who will . . . themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the gospel . . . ." The Assembly then authorized the suspension from church membership of any Presbyterian who should "sell a slave who is also in communion and good standing with our church, contrary to his or her will . . . ."

Presbyterians had already recognized that despair, immorality, and irreligion could never be controlled among Negroes so long as they were slaves. Pending the destruction of the system, the church appointed missionaries to preach, teach the Bible, and comfort the slaves in their servitude. The greatest of these men was Rev. C. C. Jones, who published, in 1842, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States.*

As uneasiness grew in the South, mission preaching and teaching among slaves became harder. After 1830 several states passed laws forbidding anyone to teach slaves to read. The Assembly of 1818 had felt it necessary to protest that "religious instruction . . . far from operating, as some have apprehended that it might, as an excitement to insubordination and insurrection would, on the contrary, operate as the most powerful means for the prevention of those evils" and the majority of sermons to Negroes labored the theme of obedience. A few owners, themselves irreligious, accepted this argument and invited missionaries to teach their slaves with the understanding that the duty of obedience would be inculcated.

The Extended Compromise

The Emancipation Proclamation (1862) and the defeat of the South in 1865 summoned Presbyterians to act in behalf of destitute ex-slaves who were being victimized by Northern interests and, in some cases, savagely repressed by terrified Southern whites. Between the years 1837 and 1870, Presbyterians were divided into the Old School Assembly and the New School Assembly. This division resulted from disputes regarding the proper interpretation to be applied to certain doctrines of Calvin. The two groups were also divided over questions of church polity. In 1861, at

the beginning of the Civil War, there was yet another division among Presbyterians—that between North and South. The Southern wing of the church later became known as the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and continues today as a major denomination.

In 1865, the Old School General Assembly founded a "Committee on Freedmen," which became the "Board of Missions for Freedmen" in 1882. The New School Presbyterian Church took comparable steps, determining to do mission work among Southern Negroes despite the overlap of territory with the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

At the outset, mission work was pressed more vigorously in the South by Northern Presbyterians than by Southerners. Self-governing Negro presbyteries and synods associated with Northern Presbyterian bodies eventually developed from this work; also, segregated collegiate and seminary education emerged. During the last decade these organizations have been merged with overlapping white judicatories of "northern" Presbyterianism, producing a more rational organization of the church. The United Presbyterian Church in North America, formed in 1858, also established evangelistic and educational work among Southern Negroes.

Three periods may be distinguished in the development of the bonds between Presbyterians and American Negroes. The *first stage* persisted until Emancipation (1619–1862): Evangelism, literacy, and the exercise of church discipline to guide and control Presbyterian slaveholders. In 1818 the church strongly opposed slavery. The New School softened its opposition by 1840, and the Old School permitted no antislavery measures of any kind between 1837 and the break with the South in 1861. A *second stage* began at Emancipation: Expanding mission work which moved strongly into Negro education. The *third stage* is now fully defined, but not yet greatly advanced: The abandonment of barriers to church fellowship that are based upon race. Segregated presbyteries and synods have been or are in the process of being abolished by Northern Presbyterians, although they are retained by the Southern Presbyterian Church. Johnson C. Smith and other colleges maintained in the South by the United Presbyterian Church are open to white students, but Negroes continue to predominate. All Presbyterian seminaries are open to Negro students, but the serious shortage of Negro candidates for the ministry limits their numbers.

A critical problem remaining unsolved between Negroes and white Presbyterians exists in cities, irrespective of region. Although a number of congregations surrounded by Negro home owners receive them as members, there is scarcely a handful of Presbyterian churches where the Negro membership exceeds one fourth of the total. For the most part, integration of Presbyterian congregations remains "token." The great majority of Presbyterian churches in neighborhoods in course of being occupied by Negroes prefer to relocate. The net effect is to preserve the familiar class and race pattern. Although movements of modern city population clearly call for integrated churches with both Negro and white ministers, these are relatively few, and the church's capacity to supply such teams of clergymen is still small.

Whereas progress toward integration of city churches has been at least "token," patterns of rigid segregation persist in rural areas.

Presbyterians stand at the crossroads. There is the positive command of our Lord to love our neighbor as ourself, and it is clear that our neighbor includes the person whom society regards as an outsider. Further, Christ calls into a fellowship those who follow him. Within this fellowship, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal. 3: 28*). In contrast to the call of the gospel there is the pervasive influence of society, which insists on a racially segregated church or a church composed of members of a single social or economic class. Many Presbyterians remain oblivious to the conflict in loyalties. Others are caught in a conflict between the opposing claims and are being pulled in two directions. There remain a number of Presbyterians who are pioneers in the task of building an "inclusive" fellowship within the local church.

UNIT I

3

PRESBYTERIANS ARE CONSERVATIVE!

Read *Jer. 6: 16-21; I Cor. 15: 1-11.*

Not everybody agrees that Presbyterians are conservative. The authors of the Air Force Manual so hotly disputed in 1960 stated flatly that "communists and communist fellow travelers and sympathizers have successfully infiltrated into our churches," and Presbyterianism was all but named. This unhappy piece of literature suffered from more than bad style and grammar. Its slanders could not be proved, and the incident left the general public impression intact: Presbyterians are conservative.

A Usable Heritage

During the Roosevelt era "conservative" was a bad word; in the age of Eisenhower it was good. Conservatives once tried to prove they were liberal "in the best sense"; but "liberal" has recently been a somewhat

bloodshot term, and it is sometimes said of the more widely accepted liberals that at heart they are "sound, conservative men."

At its best, conservatism is the ability to recognize the permanent values of the past, and the willingness to reject all that obscures them or in any way keeps them from serving the present and the future well. "Conservatives" are sharp critics; but they are not impatient with their heritage, nor do they suffer from a revolutionary anxiety to overturn the past. They believe the past contains a residual treasure that is important to the future. That is what we'd like to think it means to say "Presbyterians are conservative."

Take, for example, the way Presbyterians worship. "Those responsible for the ordering of public worship of God should maintain fidelity to the aspects of public worship which are seen in Scripture and in the New Testament Church," says the new Directory for Worship of our church, ". . . appropriating for their own such elements from the past as have been found consistent with the right showing forth of the gospel; and in the light of these resources of Scripture and ecumenical experience, endeavor to serve the needs and situation of their own worshiping community." That virtually defines "conservatism"! Along with other Protestants, Presbyterians still use the first prayer of the church, the Lord's Prayer; still repeat the earliest of its confessions of faith, the Apostles' Creed; still adhere to a succession of creeds formulated as early as A.D. 325. These and other elements of the past Presbyterians "conserve" for the wisdom they contain about living and believing in the name of Christ.

It is interesting to note that the Directory for Worship grants the authority only of "such elements from the past as have been found consistent with the right showing forth of the gospel." Even highly respected creeds may go wrong. It is the duty of Christians carefully to scrutinize claimants to their respect. Being ancient or even venerable does not of itself entitle a teaching or a custom to acceptance. It must be consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Supremacy and Challenge of the Gospel

Here we glimpse the tension in true conservatism between the vast content of history and the urgent question of what a man must believe. Above all, the Christian must believe the gospel. This is his overarching obligation. Every custom and assumption must therefore be scrutinized in the light of the word of God. In the name of conservatism itself we ruthlessly reject all that would tear us from the utterances of God, our truth, life, and hope. Although Luther and Calvin were accused of innovation and heresy, they were really concerned with the elimination of religious novelties that had thrown the gospel of Jesus Christ into dark shadow: veneration of Mary, worship of relics, prayers to saints, the accumulation of merit through pilgrimages and almsgiving, and a host of other acts. Christians appear very radical indeed when they engage in fierce onslaught upon ideas and practices long accepted by people who are unaware of the way such ideas obscure and distort the truth.

But Christians also can look like rock-hard conservatives when they insist on the supremacy of the gospel. Our American culture values freedom very highly, and this has, to some extent, downgraded authority. Of course, we have laws and policemen and jails and generals like other nations in all eras, but the national ideal is very hostile to authoritarian imposition. The people must reach their own decisions, argue the public philosophers of democracy, and when they have decided, tradition cannot be permitted to intrude upon their freedom.

Presbyterians, along with Lutherans and others who adhere to statements of belief, do not make themselves especially popular with secular philosophers when they insist that it is the supreme duty of man to obey God. The authority of the gospel and the Lordship of Christ stand in sharp contrast to the secular philosophy that "man is the measure of all things" and all essential truth springs from human reflection and inquiry. Presbyterians can seem particularly "dogmatic" to their humanistic friends. In the field of education, the conflict arises. Christian thinkers, for example, are critical of theories of education stating the view that moral and religious truth are latent and potential within the individual and need only to be called forth in the process of education. Christian thinkers insist that we must come to terms with *what God has done* in history. Accordingly, Christian education in Presbyterian churches is built around a *core of content*. Unless we know God in his acts, we cannot know him in his gifts to us. Although Presbyterian educators have no yearning whatsoever to return to education by switch and recitation, they do not believe that the guiding principle of education should be that learning consists in merely evoking what is latent and spontaneous in the child, however important this delicate and rewarding process may be as a part of the child's educational experience. Among secular philosophers, the misunderstanding of the Christian position on this point is almost complete, and when they use the adjective "conservative," they seldom intend it to be interpreted as a compliment.

1818 Was a Great Year

There is a strength to Presbyterian conservatism, but that is only the first part of the story. Take, for example, the problem of slavery. The Quakers were the first to recognize the obligation of Christian men to renounce the enslavement of their fellows and the popular arguments in justification of it. The recent existence of slavery in American history is a scandal to us now; but a century ago many respected Presbyterians argued that God had created the Negro race innately inferior and that enslavement by Christians was God's own way of leading Negroes out of paganism. To these people, kind treatment, frequent re-

vivals, and the ministry of a handful of missionaries discharged their Christian obligation.

In 1818 the General Assembly of our church adopted a long and unmistakable declaration against slavery. It was "a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature . . . utterly inconsistent with the law of God . . . and . . . totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ." The rooted immorality of slavery is described; even where masters do not tear families apart, encourage sexual immorality, or treat slaves cruelly, still the slave is "deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest." The statement was strong and practicable and would have served Presbyterians well if fewer of them had been embarrassed by it.

The document of 1818 was composed before the agitation for abolition arose. Once that happened, about 1830, attitudes hardened. Southern Presbyterians who once had no quarrel with the declarations of 1818 now threatened to quit the church if any further deliverances came from the General Assembly. Never during the colonial period, when clergymen occupied positions of public importance, nor during the Revolution, when Witherspoon and others assumed major responsibilities in political affairs, had Presbyterians claimed that Christians had no business mixing religion with politics. Now that viewpoint became so firmly established that even many enemies of slavery held that the church had no business speaking on social and political issues.

On the eve of the Civil War, therefore, Presbyterians shrank from the contradictions of the period, refused to make further pronouncements on slavery, and eventually agreed among themselves to say nothing at all in the Assembly on the subject for fear of internal division. The pronouncement of 1818 was never revoked, as some Southerners demanded; but it played almost no part in the thought and action of the Presbyterian Church in the critical decades before the Civil War. Although the New School Presbyterians, being largely northern, found it easier to speak against slavery, they too deferred to the few Southerners among them. Fearful of coming strife, Presbyterians never again arose to the clarity and courage of the year 1818.

The Pain of Struggle and the Shame of Failure

Presbyterians are conservative partly because they are a "popular" church. That is to say, they include a broad segment of the American people, irrespective of region, and their church life both reflects and must grapple with the social situation of the country at large. Some churches and sects are purely local; others make no effort to assume certain responsibilities. The Mennonites, for example, refuse military service. The Quakers, too, are pacifists; but when Herbert Hoover became President, a Quaker became the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the nation. Hoover, therefore, tacitly abandoned the position of his denomination.

Presbyterians have often been ambivalent on the ethical issues of the national life, but at least they have always lived squarely up against them. Our tradition knows the pain of the struggle and the shame of failure. Ever since the conflict over slavery and the national union, Presbyterianism has exhibited a certain reluctance to venture again into the arena. Its "conservatives" argue that the church should stick to its own spiritual business and leave politics to the people in charge. If the public men are Presbyterians and can find help in their faith, well and good, but let the church as a church remain silent, they say. In recent years, however, those who believe that the church should not speak on social issues have not prevailed within the councils of the church. The General Assembly continues to issue Social Pronouncements touching the most pressing and urgent problems facing our world.

The Presbyterian Church was the first to become active in the field of labor and industry. Charles Stelzle, a machinist and union member become minister, headed a "Department of Church and Labor" in the Board of Home Missions as early as 1903. Stelzle's sympathy with working men brought him under attack for "socialism," and he left his position in 1913, but Presbyterians continued active in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ. This body united the denominations faced with formidable problems of cities filled with immigrants, segregated by language and racial groupings, and involved in a new industrial life not too well understood.

Toward a New Definition

Although few of us question the conservatism of Presbyterians, we have yet to decide what that word shall mean among us. During the eighteenth century it generally meant orthodox doctrine and public action; in the nineteenth century it marked a general retreat from public affairs. The twentieth century reveals a divided mind among Presbyterians. Pronouncements on social issues are often not easily agreed upon by the General Assembly, and many congregations feel little responsibility to act on them. On the other hand, Presbyterianism continues, as always, to nurture men who are willing to ignore the restraints that make some Presbyterians reluctant to act. Dr. Benjamin Rush helped found America's first antislavery society before the Revolution; Robert J. Breckinridge supported President Lincoln and the national union in the face of great odds in his home state, Kentucky; Charles A. Briggs taught the new science of Biblical criticism, even though he was eventually forced out of the Presbyterian Church. And don't forget: Norman Thomas (many times Socialist candidate for President) was once a Presbyterian minister!

THE COMING OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY

Read *Matt. 28: 16-20; Acts 1: 1-11.*

To a modern schoolboy, "the world" means the whole earth, its deserted lands as well as cities and cultivated fields. But to the ancients, it meant something quite different. The Greek word *oikoumenē* meant "the whole inhabited earth"; and its inhabitants were clearly divided between subjects of Rome and "barbarians," who lived beyond its frontiers. During his missionary journeys, Paul never crossed the Roman border. Except for a tradition that the apostle Thomas established Christianity on the west coast of India, early Christianity was preached only on the coasts of the Mediterranean and its hinterlands: the Nile valley, Syria, the valley of the Rhone, and along the roads of Gaul to Britain. For Christians, the Roman frontier marked off the "world."

First Missionary Successes

But this was true only of *orthodox* Christianity. With the heresies it was different. In our time "heresy" is an emotion-laden word, but in antiquity it meant something quite precise: belief in doctrines which the church in "ecumenical" council had declared unacceptable. To be "ecumenical," a council had to include bishops from every quarter of Christendom. Such a council determined doctrine and policy for the entire "catholic" church. This "catholic" Christianity had little success among barbarians before the end of the ninth century, but the heresies spread like wildfire in many sections of the Roman world.

The *Arians* followed an Egyptian teacher who argued that Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, although divine, was created as men are and is not eternal like God. An aggressive Goth named Ulfilas was consecrated an Arian bishop. He worked hard to evangelize the Germanic tribes north of the Danube. He was so successful that when the Goths burst into Italy in the fifth century, the city of Rome was plundered, not by pagans, but by heretical Christians!

The *Nestorians* were named for a bishop who denied the full divinity of Christ. This sect penetrated as far as China and left monuments to its success—and failure.

Oriental Nestorianism was destroyed, and the Arians who captured Rome were converted to catholic orthodoxy. Eventually the peoples outside the boundaries of Rome relapsed into other religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, animism, and, later, Islam. By the fifteenth century, when the great sailors of Portugal and Spain forced a revision of the classical notion of "the world," Christianity had vanished from the ancient non-Roman territories (except for Germany, which had been soundly converted in the eighth century by Boniface, with the help of Charlemagne). The old Roman world was not subject to Roman Catholicism alone: the Greek or Eastern Church held much of the eastern Mediterranean. But despite their differences, both churches were orthodox: that is, they accepted the decrees of the ecumenical councils.

New worlds in the Orient and the Americas were opened after 1500, and Christendom felt an uneasiness in using words like "catholic" and "ecumenical." Incalculable numbers of pagans in hitherto unknown lands awaited the Christian religion; the church must learn strange tongues and convert both savages and sophisticates before it could validate its universality.

No sooner had science and exploration taught Europe what the world really was than it was engulfed by reformation and war. Protestantism survived, but scarcely more. It was two centuries before the Reformed world began to look squarely at the missionary task. The first to act were the Moravians, a tiny colony of Czechs whose founder, John Hus, had protested Roman abuses a century before Luther. The Moravians had learned the meaning of compassion under ruthless Roman Catholic persecution in Bohemia before taking refuge in Eastern Germany (about 1722). Moved by the plight of Negroes, the Moravians sent missionaries to the West Indies. This was the beginning of Protestant foreign missions, and its first objects were slaves who had been captured in Africa and shipped to the islands in the Caribbean Sea to await sale in the British colonies.

The Beginnings of Modern Missions

With the perspective of history to help us, we can now see that this mission movement was a fresh outbursting of strength, similar to the first explosion throughout the Roman Empire. Christendom now broke free of its historic confinement to Europe and the Mediterranean and surged into the Americas, Africa, and the islands and nations of Asia. Now began a struggle with the tenacious culture religions of the Eastern world: Hinduism, Buddhism, and the vital "sub-Jewish" movement of Mohammed. Although Christianity is firmly established today in both Hindu and Buddhist cultures, it has not yet found a way to break in upon Islam, despite more than a century of effort. In the New World, Roman Catholicism, protected by the arms of Spain and Portugal, swept through South and Central America and into California. In recent centuries, however, its general decadence in Latin America has given Reformed Chris-

tianity important opportunities, so that in the most populous Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries Protestantism is well planted.

The continental Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists alike, have given much to the mission movement, but it is largely the English-speaking Protestants, molded by Calvinism and stimulated by the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who have sustained mission outreach. This is partly due to the wealth created in England and America by the Industrial Revolution; but, more fundamentally, this mission outreach represents a new birth of conscience in Western Christians, a fresh urgency to preach the gospel to the whole world.

American Presbyterians first acted to alleviate the misery of Indians driven from their hunting lands, dying of disease, and lost in the delusions of animistic religions. Both Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd were missionaries to the Indians and the latter left an indelible impression on Calvinists. Shortly after the Revolutionary War, Scottish immigrants and migrants from New England began to move west. In 1789, at the tender age of one year, the General Assembly recommended that "the state of the frontier settlements should be taken into consideration, and missionaries sent to them, to form them into congregations." Established pastors, living adjacent to the new territories, traveled on horseback for periods of one to six months to the many settlements, but it soon became evident that special appointees were needed. In 1802 the Assembly formed a "Standing Committee of Missions" to put the "missionary business" on a better footing, and, in 1816, a full-fledged Board of Missions (now the Board of National Missions) was authorized to engage and pay missionaries and raise money by organizing missionary societies throughout the church. Up to this time "missions" meant only work with Indians and settlers.

In 1810, following a revival on the campus of Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, a group of New England Calvinists organized the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and shortly afterward, Americans began to send men and women overseas. Except for some scattered local societies that raised money and appointed a missionary or two on their own initiative, Presbyterians began immediately to support foreign missions through this central Board of Commissioners. But in 1837, in the midst of considerable internal friction, the Old School General Assembly approved the transfer of the strongest of these local mission societies, the Western Foreign Missionary Society of Pittsburgh, to the jurisdiction of the Assembly, and it became the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a Scottish-American group that, with another Reformed group, was to become the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1858 and, a century later, was to join in forming the present United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, was also becoming aware of an obligation to the "heathen." In 1796 it formed a Missionary Society in New York for Indian work; in 1835 its first foreign missionary was commissioned.

Recent Developments

Encounter with the ancient cultures of the East made it less and less possible for Western Christians to think of Chinese and Oriental Indians as benighted heathen. They are vastly more sophisticated peoples, very different from illiterate primitives. In these small gatherings of Oriental Christians, there soon began to arise leaders who proved fully as capable of managing their new churches as the missionaries. Also, the spirit of nationalism convinced new Christians and Westerners alike that the church must be autonomous. This century, therefore, has witnessed the rise of a series of national churches replacing missions or overseas presbyteries attached to the American church. In 1958 the Presbytery of the Cameroun, for example, became the Presbyterian Church of the Cameroun, West Africa. Close ties between Cuban and American Christians, on the other hand, have preserved the Presbytery of Cuba as a member of the Synod of New Jersey.

To most foreign Christians, the denominational traditions of England and America are meaningless. Outnumbered by the non-Christian masses, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, and others have formed united churches, such as the United Church of Christ in Japan, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and the United Church of South India. In all of these, Presbyterians have surrendered an old identity for clearer witness to the Christian fellowship that transcends racial and national differences.

Two international organizations enable Presbyterians in America to work with Reformed churches of Europe and the young churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The World Presbyterian Alliance enrolls eighty-three bodies historically linked with Calvinism. The World Council of Churches unites Calvinist churches with non-Roman Christians of other traditions and confessions: Lutheran, Wesleyan, Anglican, and Greek.

The mission movement represents a fresh attempt by the church to be truly catholic (universal) and ecumenical (world-wide). Spreading from Reformed Europe as the faith of colonists, missions in the nineteenth century became a deliberately organized program for the purpose of implanting Christianity throughout the world. So swift has been its success that there are now fewer "new Christians" in dependent mission churches than in autonomous national churches. The young churches are speaking back to their "parents," who must receive them as partners in obedience.

For Presbyterians, the historical change from "missions" to parity in fellowship is symbolized by the abandonment of the old Board of Foreign Missions,

founded in 1837, and the establishment in its place of our church's Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations. "Mission" is still the task of the whole church, and Christians in every land are partners, whether in Asia, Africa, Latin America, or North America. Furthermore, it is beginning to dawn on American Christians that we do not live in a "Christian" country, as we have sometimes imagined. The young churches have grown up in the awareness that only through grace can the tiny ship of the church survive the sea of unbelief that threatens to engulf it. Thus, it is the peculiar mark of the ecumenical era of church life that the parents are learning wisdom from their offspring.

UNIT I

5

PRESBYTERIANS AND THE CITY

Read *Amos 5: 8–24.*

THERE were no great cities in the United States in 1800. Only six towns contained more than 10,000 people. The largest, Philadelphia, numbered 81,009; only New York came near it with 49,491. But by 1890 there were 443 towns and cities over 8,000, and city-dwellers had multiplied 87 times over, whereas the total population had increased only 12 times. In 1950 there were 436 times as many urban people in the United States as in 1790, and 59 per cent of the American population lived in cities as against 35 per cent in 1890 and 5 per cent in 1790.

Complex, Closely Associated Life

The United States ceased to be a rural culture during the generation that followed the Civil War. We are today a vast urban society, immensely enriched by industry, suffering the consequences of change too swift to control, puzzled by a revolution we do not yet altogether understand.

Church literature before 1830 scarcely mentioned the city either as a problem or an advantage. Like Jefferson, most Americans assumed that agricultural life was essential to democracy and that it would continue to dominate America indefinitely. But by 1840 a wave of immigrants had flooded the East and by 1890 keen observers among churchmen knew what was happening. "Some philanthropists think that the congestion of the city might be relieved and the miseries of the slums alleviated by removing families to unoccupied lands. . . . But all such fail to appreciate the profound significance of the transition during this century, from muscular to mechanical power," wrote Josiah Strong, General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, in 1898, in *The Twentieth Century City.* "[This is] the most important change which has ever taken place in the history of the world; one which has already wrought an industrial revolution, and is rapidly creating a new civilization. It has separated, as by an impassable gulf, the simple, homespun, individualistic life of the world's past, from the complex, closely associated life of the present and of the future."

Not only had the population grown and concentrated in the cities, but the invention of the steam engine and the numerous machines it could drive had created large factories and congested communities of resident laborers. The new masses had been put to work with unprecedented efficiency and productivity, and cities were one result. By contrast, "the farm problem" was already apparent. In 1890 new lands cultivated by improved methods were already supplying more food than the cities, immense markets though they were, could consume. Gladstone's estimate was frequently quoted: Between 1800 and 1850 as much wealth had been produced in Europe and America as in all the previous history of mankind; that wealth doubled again by 1870.

The Development of the Modern City

The social shock was felt in three stages: First: Immigration. America had been built by immigrants, but not in such invasions as these. The first group was Irish Roman Catholic: 1830–1850; the second, also Roman Catholic, but primarily Central European, came in 1880–1890 and totaled 5,200,000. Although some Germans and Scandinavians settled on Midwestern farms, most immigrants concentrated in the cities. By 1860, for example, New York State was 26 per cent foreign born, but New York City 47 per cent. One half of the people in Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco were foreign born; one third in Boston and Philadelphia. Appallingly corrupt political machines, of which Tammany Hall in New York remains the historic symbol, were erected on the dependence and discretion of these peoples.

The second stage: Immigrants were not only "foreigners," but were workers united by common economic interests. The new revolution absorbed immense numbers of unskilled laborers in major industries, such as mining, steel production, textiles, and railroads. Although the income of the worker improved between 1840 and 1890, his proportionate share of the national wealth decreased. But his desire to live more comfortably was stimulated by the opulence around him. Tension between employers and workers increased. In this period the growing conviction of labor was that its economic interest constituted it a distinct class with definite rights and sufficient power to seize a larger share of the product of American industry. Work in

"The problem of the twentieth century will be the city."

the new nation was no longer solitary, as on the farm or in cottage industry, but in groups.

The third stage: Cities called for a new moral climate. The old morality did not thrive. American cities have consistently produced higher crime and infant mortality rates, and more suicide, murder, divorce, and delinquency than rural areas. The influence of the church diminished in the cities more rapidly than elsewhere. Few realists would argue even in 1890 that city dwellers were innately more wicked, but many knew that the congestion, poverty, and the social disorganization of city life made thieves of men and prostitutes of women. As Strong put it:

"Our moral progress is not indisputable while our material progress is. . . . The increase of material wealth is simply prodigious. There has been no corresponding increase in our wealth of literature and of noble ideals; no such massing of moral and spiritual treasure. . . .

"If, now, it is true of modern civilization that materialism is its supreme peril, pre-eminently true is it of American civilization; and if material growth finds its comparative in the New World, the modern city furnishes its superlative."

Fear of the Roman Catholics

How did Presbyterians react to their nation's second revolution?

First, with pride in progress mixed with real fear for the Republic and the Protestant religion. The founders of Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1836 called their city "the greatest and most growing community in America." They declared that no seminary in the nation was qualified to meet the peculiar challenge of the city, nor was there a single major theological school located in a great city. They proposed that their students should work in the city and learn its problems first hand.

But there was fear, too—principally fear of the

Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the colonial period, Presbyterians and Congregationalists had argued heatedly against the English state-supported church, and fear of authoritarian tendencies in religious and civil life had never died out. Then, in the 1830's came the wave of Irish Catholics. The two Breckinridges, John and Robert, were fluent writers, debaters, and preachers. They now attacked Roman Catholic religion and custom as a menace to republican institutions and a threat to the moral character of the nation. In 1835, John Breckinridge engaged in a public debate with Bishop John Hughes. "Churches established by law, by kings or pontiffs, and maintained by coercion, are an invasion of the natural liberties of man," said Breckinridge. "The Romish hierarchy was an *usurpation* in the days of Luther, and it *is so now.*" He called the mind of the priesthood "*the common-sewer of iniquity,*" termed Hughes' answers "anti-American and . . . anti-Christian." Robert Breckinridge prosecuted the case in Baltimore and made much of the "revelations" of a nun, Olevia Neal, "for nineteen years a prisoner called Sister Isabella," who left her convent. Even when conducted within limits, the controversy was freighted with tremendous emotion and embellished equally with grotesque stories and accusations that enjoyed wide currency among Americans who cared little for the Republic and less for Protestantism.

Two generations later Roman Catholicism was reinforced by further immigration from Italy, Poland, Central Europe, and elsewhere. Protestant fears bloomed again. An ugly weed called the American Protective Association—"APA" is still a commonplace of Roman Catholic slang—sprang up in 1887 and had flourished and rotted by 1896. Many Protestants privately supported the movement, but it had nothing to do with the churches as such. In American history there has always been a clear distinction between popular anti-Catholicism of the know-nothing or Ku Klux Klan type and informed criticism of Roman Catholic institutionalism and its impact upon the American political and social system.

How could the nation benefit from an influx of five million Latin and Slavic Catholics, most of them unacquainted with the American tradition and unwittingly entangled in corrupt political machines? "There have been surprisingly few conversions from Romanism to Protestantism," wrote Samuel Loomis in 1887. "Considering the fact that she has been compelled to push her system amid the full blaze of the light of modern times, in an atmosphere permeated with that spirit of freedom whose pure breath is her poison, the success of Rome in the United States appears amazing. There are, at the present time, about 7,000,000 of Roman Catholics (communicants) in the land. In 1800 there were but 100,000. . . . The Catholic Church is emphatically the working man's church." Loomis indicted the Protestant communions for their failure to reach labor. "In 1880 there was in the United States one evangelical church organization to every 516 of the population; in Boston, *counting churches of all kinds,* there was but one to every 1,600 of the population; in Chicago, one to every 2,081; in New York, one to every 2,468; in St. Louis, one to every 2,800." Immigration, the Roman Catholic problem, the growth of the industrial labor force—in short, the city—were in 1900 and remain today a single complex package, a single unsolved problem for Protestantism.

How did Presbyterians react to the city, thus understood?

Soon after the outbreak of controversy with Romanism, Protestant churchmen began to see that Roman Catholicism was only part of the picture. The early American ideal of a nation permeated by desire to make the divine will its public law had never disappeared from the Calvinist churches. In 1815 Lyman Beecher, the able New England leader, had advocated "Societies for the Promotion of Morals and Prevention of Vice" in every hamlet of the nation. In the 1830's anti-slavery sentiment was really a moral crusade to rid the nation of sin. Faced with the city, the deep-rooted urge to create a righteous society came to the fore. "Religion does not consist in opinions and ceremonies, but in character and life," wrote Strong. "The churches must both instruct and exhort concerning all duties."

A New Social Spirit

The "social gospel" was the latest form of Puritan ideal Christianity, applied now to industrial society and city life. "The only radical remedy for our social ills is a new social spirit, the spirit of brotherhood, the spirit of love, vital enough to enter into, and to control, all relationships. This is Christ's remedy."

The social gospel was not just theory. The denominations took practical steps to restore communication with the working masses. Cities could not be divided, and so churches began to work together, slowly reversing the habit of separate denominationalism established early in the century. Moses Hoge, a seasoned Presbyterian conservative of Southern culture, told the General Assembly in 1888 of "the most complete of all the plans suggested: the formation of local Evangelical Alliances in all the cities . . . . This is the plan of denominational co-operation: . . . to district the whole territory to be occupied, the entire population of nonchurchgoers . . . to constitute the field and each church the force to work it by the agency of supervisors or directors and visitors making a systematic canvass, house by house, room by room . . . . Time alone can determine whether such denominational co-operation will become the permanent policy of the church in laboring for city evangelism."

Increasingly, it did. Alarmed by the neglect of new populations by withering city congregations, prodded by the social gospel, aghast at the "atheism" of the workers' movement, Presbyterians established an agency of city evangelism in 1903—the earliest such action by any American denomination—under the

superintendence of Charles Stelzle: The Department of Church and Labor of the Board of Home Missions. Stelzle was a workingman and a union member and was well accepted by labor. He was also a gifted publicist, and within two years the Assembly was urging that there be organized in each city groups "able to inform the churches with respect to the aims of organized labor, and to inform the workingman concerning the mission of the church." In pamphlets, books, and addresses, Stelzle courageously asked Presbyterians, "Is the Church Opposed to Workingmen?"—it was a book title.

Presbyterians have been leaders in forming, financing, and administering co-operation bodies such as the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (founded 1908), now incorporated into the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Our church has continued to think through its own position year by year and to establish denominational agencies of mission and social welfare. In 1910, prodded by Stelzle, the Assembly declared: "We hold that much [poverty] is due to preventable disease, uncompensated accidents, lack of proper education, and other conditions for which society is responsible, and which society ought to seek to remove." Child-labor legislation, industrial safety, accident insurance, limitation of working hours, slum clearance, arbitration of industrial disputes, public care of the sick and indigent, reform of punitive laws, and a more equitable system for the distribution of the national wealth were all advocated. These declarations and later pronouncements set the direction of the urban church work of the Board of National Missions and the Department of Church and Society of the Board of Christian Education.

The Problem Today—Far from Solved

Although the General Assembly has been generous with pronouncements, material progress depends on better understanding of the city itself—which still defies adequate analysis—and more effective action by Christians in local churches and public organizations. Suburbia and the outer belt with "rural" city workers are relatively new areas of the city. To these Presbyterians flee and enjoy a success that is shadowed only by our tragic failure in the inner city. Lack of appropriate organization is one reason. For example, a metropolitan area may be divided between presbyteries composed of declining inner-city churches and more prosperous presbyteries that include the well-to-do churches of the suburbs. The Board of National Missions and presbytery strategy committees are struggling with the problem of how to mold into a real unity the "suburban sprawl" and the core of the inner city; traditional forms of Presbyterian organization are not easy to adapt to the swiftly changing urban scene.

Since the decay of American inner-city life is critical to the whole church body of the country, suburbanites would do well to study the 1956 report of the Board of National Missions entitled "A Study of the Inner City" (obtainable from Room 1140, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y.; 50 cents). For Presbyterians, as for all America, the problem is far from solved.

Unit II—The Living Hope of the People of God

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1

WHO ARE WE?

Read the *entire* First Letter of Peter,
then read again *chs. 1: 3 to 2: 10.*

IN ORDER to understand The First Letter of Peter, we have to make believe or take a journey through time and space. We must use our imaginations in order to put ourselves in the place of those to whom the words were first spoken or written.

You Are There

Try to imagine that you are not sitting where you are, dressed in twentieth-century clothes. Imagine that you are back at the beginning of the second century, in a town in Asia Minor (now Turkey), in a medium-sized room in a Roman house. The room is pretty well filled with people, most of whom are standing. They are dressed in the rather easy-flowing robes such as you see in pictures of Roman times.

A certain number of these people you have known for some time, because for about two years you have been meeting with them on occasion as a class receiving instruction; the rest of the people you are now seeing for the first time. This house is also familiar, since the class has met here a few times. Often it met

in other places, because it has been unwise to meet in the same house all the time. The reason for this is that reports have come from other cities that such gatherings have sometimes been dispersed by the authorities. In some cases group members have been arrested, some imprisoned, some actually put to death. For security reasons, therefore, and out of consideration for the host and hostess, the meetings have not always been held in the same place.

This accounts for the atmosphere of excitement in the group. Many of those present, as they listen to the speaker, are also, subconsciously, listening for heavy footsteps and a banging on the outer door. With the other members of the group you feel safe because you know everyone has been carefully "screened." You have all been tested by being together and receiving the same teaching. You have all made the same commitment.

This present meeting began last night, when your teacher gave you the final instructions. After that you watched throughout the night, meditated, and prayed. Early in the morning you were taken to a place with sufficient water, and there you were baptized. Then you were brought to this house and dressed in a white robe. Here you were presented to an "elder," a man you had not met before, whom you find is referred to as *"episkopos"* or guardian (in modern English, "bishop"). He laid his hands on your head in welcome and blessing and introduced you to these other members of the Christian church in the district. They have welcomed you as fellow Christians, and now you are all preparing to share a meal together.

The leader, the bishop, is now speaking. He speaks first of all to the class, but in the presence of all the members of the church. You therefore are very interested to know what he will have to say to you who have entered into this new, important, and possibly dangerous undertaking. Those who are not new are glad to be reminded of their own admission and to renew the reflections and instruction that went with it.

The Center of Life

You are not surprised, if you still imagine yourself in that second-century group, that the bishop begins with a burst of praise and speaks next of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Right at the start the words are cheerful. They are not solemn, but they are weighty. This is what brought you into this gathering. You found a sense of joy and of hope among certain people who turned out to be "Christians," and this joy has been the keynote of your instruction. Now the leader explains why this is so.

We have, he says, been not only baptized, but, in fact, "born anew." It is as though we had started a new life. Like anyone born for the first time, everything lies ahead of us, full of endless possibilities. "By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (*I Peter 1: 3.*) We are convinced that Jesu was raised from death in order to reign in heaven. Th faith caused us to be baptized, so that going und the water we, too, could experience a kind of deat and, coming up again, know symbolically a resurre tion (*Rom. 6: 4*). This has now to be experienced as daily reality—that we have died to the old life an have been raised to a new life. We have something look forward to, the living hope of which the bisho speaks, "an inheritance which is imperishable, und filed, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

Look now at the first verse of the epistle and at *ch 1: 17* and *2: 11*. You will see the epistle is addresse "to the exiles of the dispersion," and that the peop are referred to as "aliens and exiles" and their life a "the time of your exile." This means that in those day the Christian church was thought of as having take over the place of the old Israel. The people of Isra had been scattered around the Mediterranean worl and they lived as Jews without many of them ev having seen Jerusalem. All the same, they thought Jerusalem as their spiritual home, so that they fe themselves to be exiles living in a strange world. Th center of their life was somewhere else. Paul used th same idea when writing to the Christians in Philippi, city inhabited mostly by retired Roman soldiers. The were a colony of the great city on the Tiber, and tha was where their citizenship was centered. So Paul sai "Our commonwealth is in heaven." (*Phil. 3: 20.*)

We may imagine ourselves in the first half of th second century, but actually we live in the secon half of the twentieth—a very different world. The there were no atomic bombs, no jet travel, no explora tions of space. Surprisingly, in spite of languag clothes, and a different pace, the people turn out to b much the same as today. The Bible reveals the bas issues of life and what people are like, always. In th sense, "human nature does not change." Better stil it shows us what Christians have in common in ever age. In fact, the New Testament makes us feel we ar behind in enthusiasm and understanding.

The First Letter of Peter brings two things to ou attention. They are important because they are sai to "new" Christians, and it is always good to remem ber what the first day in any venture was like. Pe haps we were baptized as Christians or admitted the church long enough ago to be hazy about how felt. For I Peter there are two things involved: th new life made possible by Jesus' resurrection, and th reality of the Christian fellowship.

Not Novel, but New

From our point of view, a newborn baby is a ne thing in an old world. If the baby could have a poi of view, it would be the world that would appear to b new. So with the new Christian. The place is the sam his work perhaps the same, the same neighbors ar associates. But they are seen from the new, *Christi* perspective. People and values rearrange themselve

The faith and discipleship of other Christians are more to us now than anything else about them. That is why Christianity breaks barriers. As Paul puts it: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view . . . . If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." (*II Cor. 5: 16-17.*) With his increased concern for people, the Christian begins to look at everything else with new eyes, estimating what helps people in their true life and what does not.

Newness and novelty are not the same thing. The modern world is avid for the novel. A new automobile design, all tail fins and chrome, is novel, but it might merely cover the same motor within. A new and unusual set of clothes at first attracts attention, but if the person who wears them is as dull or as mean as ever, the clothes only make matters worse. The really new changes from within. We can see the same person we have always seen and yet be forced to say, "Why, so-and-so is a new man!" Something that has happened inside has enabled him to look out on a new world with the same eyes, to speak of new interests with the same lips, and with the same hands to accomplish new tasks. We shall see later that relationships are what reveal the change. How terribly the world needs this freshness; a newness not applied like a coat of paint, but a newness growing up from inside, forcing its way out because it cannot contain itself. Not contrived, but always revived—like being born over again. (And so I Peter describes it in *chs. 1: 3, 14, 23; 2: 2.*)

The newborn child discovers, with the new world, a set of relationships in which he belongs. First parents and family, then others. Those who belong to him are distinct from others because they are constant. They are always there, always do the same things, always have the same attitude to him, are always concerned about him. This marks them off from others who come and go, who may be kind, hostile, or indifferent, who seem to belong to another world.

The New Testament writers all assume they are writing to a group definitely marked off from others, people who have had some such experience of discovering a new sense of belonging. Christians are discovered as people, quite ordinary people otherwise, who are related to one another because they all have the same Lord, the same final aim, the same real center, the same ultimate home. They share together a homing instinct and a security such as a child knows.

So, says I Peter, we are to think of ourselves as those who are away from home, whose center of life is elsewhere, in this case in heaven. This is our inheritance. This is not simply a tricky idea, but a transforming fact of life. (We can suggest dangers in it and will speak of those later.) Jesus had said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (*Matt. 6: 21.*) That is to say, where your mind keeps coming back to and your affections are drawn, that is where your treasure is—no matter what you may say. That was what the bishop had to say to the newly baptized in Asia Minor in a world in which life for the Christian was, to say the least, precarious. The Christian could no longer count on society or the government to sympathize with his ideas or way of life. It was important for him to know he had a home.

Where Our True Treasure Is

Like the "dispersed" of Israel, the Christian people have a Jerusalem where their hearts dwell. It is not on a hill in Palestine, but in the eternal realm of God. So while we are here, we are not really at home in our own home town. But we have a security those who have never left home have never known. Our center, the core of our life, the place where our laws originate and where our ideas are formed, which is both our origin and our destination, is forever safe, "an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (*I Peter 1: 4*). It is beyond the reach of contamination, of destruction; nothing needs to be added to it, and it is our certain goal. So we are kept from insecurity and fear. We have nothing final to lose. The most others can take from us is life, which would be unwise on their part for it would be our gain, a passport to our true country. It is true we cannot take our earthly possessions with us, but we do not grieve because we cannot. We have no need to. We go where our true treasure is; we go to claim it there, where the "Shepherd and Guardian of [our] souls" (*ch. 2: 25*) has gone by virtue of his resurrection. So, "Baptism . . . saves you, . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him" (*ch. 3: 21-22*).

The chief difference is that whereas a home lies always, in a sense, "behind us," this reality lies always *before* us. It is not something we grow away from, but live toward. All the past was a preparation for this, and all past prophets were in a sense looking for it (see *ch. 1: 10-11*). The death and resurrection of Jesus, into which we have entered, was the climax. The Old Testament did not literally speak about Jesus, but the church can read it with him in mind, and it all has a new meaning as if it were actually written about him. This is the "good news" (*v. 12*), and it puts us in a position not only more favored than that of the prophets but even more favored than that of the angels. When I was a child we used to sing a hymn, not a very good one, but one stanza began, "There's a song for little children," and it ended,

> "A song which even angels
> Can never, never sing;
> They know not Christ as Savior,
> But worship him as King."

That is what I Peter has in mind here—the wonder of having found in Jesus the answer to all the expectations and hopes of human life. The great prospect in

which we rejoice is the eternal satisfaction of all the unquenchable longing that it seems God himself has implanted in our hearts.

It has been guessed lately that, with prosperity and leisure, many people's morals have been corrupted simply because they are bored. It is so easy to go right through the ordinary human satisfactions and come out the other side unfulfilled. The phrases used by I Peter give us an idea of the satisfaction found by the Christian, "born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable" (*v. 23*). "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (*Ch. 2: 9;* see also *vs. 4-5.*) As Hosea said of the Israelites who were negligible until God called them, "Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (*I Peter 2: 10;* see also *Hos. 2: 23,* where these words of the prophet first appeared

Finding ourselves more and more at home in th group with this wonderful hope, we are tempted to a why we should go out; why not shut ourselves up it? That, of course, has been tried, and it has a ways failed. It seems to be God's design that we shou be dispersed. We have found at deep levels a securi more enduring than anything provided by a progra of investment or insurance or by government scheme yet we are to live as though our chief concern we outside the group in which we found it. The Christia church is "dispersed" for a reason. It exists in socie because, not being a part of that society, it has gre value for it. The ultimate purpose of those in t Christian fellowship is not to nourish one another sense of security, but to offer themselves in worshi and accept the commission God always gives to tho who worship him: that is, to go out and put themselv at the disposal of their fellow men.

UNIT II

2

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Read again *I Peter 2: 11 to 4: 11.*

New life means new relationships. Being a Christian means having different relationships on all sides. This applies first of all within the group—to other Christians. We sometimes forget how much this occupied the New Testament writers. Paul had to deal with it in writing to Corinth and to Philippi. In his epistle to the Philippians, he dealt with it much as the speaker does in I Peter. Paul asked the Philippians to consider one another and not to think of themselves more highly than they ought, but humbly and realistically (*Phil. 2: 1-5*). This is what I Peter is saying: "Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind" (*ch. 3: 8*). "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another." (*Ch. 5: 5.*) Both Paul and this speaker find the supreme example in Jesus, who humbled himself from his high position in heaven and became, not merely a man, but a servant. How do we in practice do this?

Involved with Many

At the present time we have been taught to think a great deal about "relationship." We have even invented a verb, "to relate." We are told we must learn to relate to one another, i.e., to adjust. It is true, of course, that we are to have toward one another an over-all attitude, called, in the New Testament, by a definite word, *"agapē,"* or Christian "love." First Peter says, "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." (*Ch. 4: 8.*)

The trouble with this advice is that it is too genera People too often deal with one another in crises. The are not always able to stop and figure out what lo would dictate in these situations. And if we cou determine what to do, we should probably be too lat and even our silence while determining what to might be taken to be an affront. For this reason, t idea of relationship is not, by itself, enough. We mus as the New Testament realized, deal with the matter relationships—in the plural. You will discover th many of the New Testament epistles deal one by o with the different classes of relationships in whi Christians found themselves. The lists belong to a kin of instruction we call "catechetical," given in prepar tion for baptism. First Peter refers back to such teac ing as though by way of reminder. Some of the rel tionships involved people inside the church, son outside, some both.

Different relationships have different purposes, i volve different virtues, and issue in different duties. is entirely possible for the same two people on differe days to be in different relationships with each othe We could imagine a Mr. A, who appears in court o day charged, let us say, with a traffic violation. H appears before Mr. B, who is the judge. In this ca Mr. A is related to Mr. B as defendant to the pers who administers the law. Mr. A's duty is to respect t court; Mr. B's, to judge impartially without referen to any other relationship he may have to Mr. A. B it is possible that on another day Mr. B may go as patient to see Mr. A, who is his physician. Now t relationship is reversed, and the judge, as patient, h to respect the diagnosis and prescription of Mr. A.

Or we may imagine Mr. C, who is the employee of Mr. D and, in the relationship of employee, has certain duties he must perform for his employer. On another occasion, Mr. C and Mr. D meet in the town meeting or on the school committee. Here they are equal as citizens, and that relationship takes the place of their other relationship. Each has one vote, each has an equal right to speak. We recognize that there is a difference in the relationships of a husband to a wife, of man to the government, of a servant to his master, of children to parents and parents to children. The early church was more keenly aware of this than we are. In every case the rule of love prevailed, but the application of it was different and called for different virtues, qualities, responses, and duties in each case.

Civil Disobedience?

In *I Peter 2: 11-15*, Christians are reminded that it is important to consider what picture people outside the church are going to get from their behavior to one another, the only way others can tell what being a Christian means. Both Paul (in *Rom., ch. 13*) and this speaker were concerned that Christians exemplify the right relationship toward those over them in the government. "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him." (*I Peter 2: 13.*) They are to "honor the emperor" (*v. 17*). That is to say, part of being a Christian is to carry out one's responsibilities to the state. The human institutions of government were thought of as divinely ordained, the means appointed by God for keeping order and making possible a civilized and peaceful society. There can be a Christian relationship as a citizen to the state.

We recall Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." He also said, ". . . and to God the things that are God's." The state has a divinely appointed job to do. It is possible, however, for the state to go beyond that and demand from men something that only God himself should demand. This changes the relationship. When any government in our day arrives at the point at which it can no longer be questioned, cannot permit criticism or opposition leadership, then it is on the way to becoming an enemy of God. It wants men to put themselves into a relationship to rulers that belongs only to the relationship of man to God.

This situation is found in the book of The Revelation to John. There the attitude to the state is very different. By that time the Roman Empire had come to demand worship of its subjects, and the attitude of Christians had to change. In the time of I Peter this had not yet come to pass, and the state could still be treated as God's appointed means. To carry out one's duties as a citizen was, therefore, part of the duty to love God and neighbor in so far as neighbors were fellow citizens. As the Christian conscience becomes aware of injustices under government, it may also be the duty of love to engage in "civil disobedience," and, as I write this, many of our brethren around the world are faced with this decision.

In America we hold the theory that "all men are created equal." This is true in politics as it applies to our relationships as citizens. We have equal rights and one equal vote per citizen. It is our duty *as Christians*, a duty of Christian love, to pay the taxes levied and to do our share in the privilege, so hard won, of electing the officers of government. It is our Christian duty to use our vote with all the information and intelligence we can get.

Obedient Slaves and Masters

Not all relationships, however, are on the same level. If we had looked around at the Christian group gathered in the room in the time of I Peter, we should have found people of many kinds. Some of them would have been not only poor, but slaves. This does not mean that they were necessarily uneducated or uncultured. Slaves were often tutors of their master's children or advisers and trusted managers of their estates. In the Roman Empire slaves came from all regions and all races, all classes of society. The fact remained that they were slaves and at the absolute disposal of their masters until they were freed or died. The Christian duty of a servant, whether slave or free, was to be obedient and responsive to his master, "not only to the kind and gentle but also to the overbearing" (*ch. 2: 18*). Love in this relationship did not depend upon whether or not the servant liked his master or mistress, but depended upon the fact of the relationship.

We find it intolerable that the early church made no protest against slavery as such. Slavery was a very ancient institution, a natural result of constant warfare. Even the highly regarded classical Greek civilization (as is sometimes conveniently forgotten) was based on it. It seemed to be almost a part of the natural order. The Christian church was small and powerless and in hiding. Its first task was to find the Christian way in life as it existed. In the course of time, the implications of Christian faith would cause deeper questions to be asked, but in the meantime, the Christians made the great step forward of understanding God's law of love to require *mutual* responsibilities. First Peter does not deal with the reciprocal duty of masters —perhaps because the thought leads on to the example of Christ and of the salvation achieved by his suffering (*v. 21*). We find the duties of masters in such passages as *Col. 4: 1* and *Eph. 6: 9* where it is said that "there is no partiality" with God and both master and slave have one Master in heaven.

This understanding of variety in relationships, even in the life of the same person, needs to be recovered and to be reconsidered in the twentieth century. There is nothing degrading or undemocratic about the status of employee or of citizen or of pupil, nor is there occasion for pride in the corresponding places of employer, state officer, or teacher. They simply imply

different duties. All of us together are in the relationship of creatures to the Creator and of worshipers to the Lord.

Husbands and Wives—in Love

The same thing may be said about the injunctions to wives. In all the early Christian discussion of relationships, the important concern was the "witness" given to the outside world that a Christian could, by his or her faith, perform his role better than the non-Christian. This is illustrated in another way in I Peter: "Wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior" (*ch. 3: 1-2*). As in Corinth (*I Cor. 7: 12-16*), it was possible to find Christian wives with pagan husbands and pagan wives with Christian husbands. In the ancient world, women were not generally thought of as having the same status as men and, in some places, were merely chattels. But, already in the New Testament, we find women treated as persons, and the church knew that in Christ there was, so far as salvation was concerned, "neither male nor female." In society, however, women were expected to be submissive, and this the Christian women were encouraged to be. We ourselves may be entering a period like that of the Roman period, when sex had become a commodity or a plaything and most pagan worship was orgiastic. In such circumstances, the witness of a Christian woman in the marriage relationship was by means of submission, purity, and reliance upon personal worth rather than upon outward adornment.

The church was later to react violently against sexual perversion, but it took a long time before a sacramental view of marriage could be worked out. But here we could again make the same mistake about relationships. In most respects women have won, as they should in Christ, the same position as men in personal, political, and legal rights, and in many other areas of life. There remains, however, the different functions of the sexes, and these have extensive psychological ramifications. Some of the problems that cause marriage breakups are undoubtedly due to confusion as to the proper relationships, the failure of men to function as males and of women to function as females. We should have to find some terms other than those used in the New Testament, but the facts of life still require that we understand the different and reciprocal relationship between men and women.

I Peter 3: 7 enjoins the husbands that they also have Christian duties: "Live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered." We cannot just sweep away the adjective "weaker." There is a sense in which it still applies, if women are to receive due respect and honor, although there are many senses in which it does not apply. More important is the emphasis on the fact that the relationships of marriage ought to be such as to foster the mutual relationship of husband and wife with God. It has been aptly said that, when a man and woman acknowledge a mutual Lord, they are less likely to engage in attempts to lord it over each other.

The place of the Christian religion in marriage is a matter on which there could well be a great deal more instruction by the ministry in preparation for marriage and much more prayerful discussion in the churches. Husbands must learn the husbandly way to treat a wife, and wives the wifely way to treat a husband, so that together they may share equally in growth toward eternal life. The oneness they find in their married life is an expression of their oneness before God and its earthly enrichment. The whole subject of conjugal love is practically banned in modern fiction, and the churches must assume the responsibility for studying, understanding, and commanding it. Our whole approach has been too negative, and it is small wonder that young people become submerged under the barrage of views in which romance and adultery take precedence over sacramental love.

"The Strength Which God Supplies"

The whole question of relationships, inside or outside the church, each situation carrying its own Christian response, is summed up in *ch. 3: 8:* "All of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind." We cannot rest content with such general injunctions (as we too often do), but these principles applied in the several relationships are the basic means, the guides to the effective response in each one.

Besides differences in relationships, there are differences of abilities and skills, and I Peter is aware of this also. It was essential that Christians "practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another" (*ch. 4: 9*) in view of the helplessness of so many early Christians. It is within the Christian group that the author is concerned about the use of abilities. No two persons have the same ability, nor do they need to pretend they have. There are two rules: Any ability is to be employed for the other person's well-being, and it is to be employed "as good stewards of God's varied grace" (*v. 10*). This reminds us also of Paul's saying in *I Cor. 12: 7*, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." So I Peter, in the verses that follow, says that whether it is the ability to speak or to render any service whatsoever, it is to be done, not to the best of *our* ability, but "by the strength which God supplies" so that he may be glorified.

So we find that the New Testament virtue of humility is not that forced attitude that refuses to recognize we have gifts which differ, but the more realistic attitude that recognizes each has his own particular ability, gift, or grace, and his or her own place in the Christian scheme of things. It also recognizes that in the sight of God every gift is equal,

ecause all functions are necessary in the complex re-tionships of life and one is not intrinsically above nother. It is by this mutual recognition that problems emulation are overcome. The object of the ordering of every relationship and the use of every gift is "in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (*v. 11*). It is not, in the New Testament, an unreal or impractical ideal.

3

WHY ARE WE TO DO IT?

Read *Acts 3: 1 to 4: 12.*

When we get into the complexity of the relationships involved in being a Christian, the distant pe spoken of in the first article of this unit is likely be forgotten. Our allegiance to a distant home and e promise of future reward are not in themselves otivation enough for working out the complicated fairs of life in a Christian way. In I Peter, the Chris-ns spoken to are likely to be tested and in danger of ving up the Christian faith, so there is constant ref-ence to something more immediate that will hold em to their faith and to their task in the world.

We find it first in *ch. 1: 8,* and it can be translated two ways. It can be taken as a statement: "Without aving seen him you love him; though you do not now e him you believe in him." The person referred to , of course, Christ. There are people unlike Peter, mes, and John, and the rest of the original twelve, ho have never seen Jesus and yet have come to love im. This reliance on faith, as *v. 9* says, is the means salvation. What it amounts to is complete depend-nce on Christ, even though he cannot be known as her people are known.

The other translation takes the verbs as impera-ves: "Without having seen him—love him! Though ou do not now see him—believe in him!" Someday esus Christ will be revealed to each one of us. In the neantime, though we have yet to see him, we are to ve him, believe in him, and rejoice. The people be-re Christ, spoken of in *v. 10,* were related to him in ne way, and we who have lived since in another way. either we nor they have relied on sight. We are all ound together by faith.

One Event Is the Past

The Christian life depends on both past and future. Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your ope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at he revelation of Jesus Christ." (*V. 13.*) "Gird up" neans "get ready." How? First, the Christian is to ut himself off from the past: "Do not be conformed o the passions of your former ignorance" (*v. 14*). These passions we now know are incapable of the kind f fulfillment we once thought possible. In ignorance he fulfillment of these desires was considered of prime mportance—the chief business of life. Now, however, ve are led to see that holiness is the Christian's central concern and his main business also (see *vs. 15-16*).

To cut ourselves off from the past by changing the focus of our desires does not mean that the past is *wholly* done away with. One moment of the past still has an immense importance. Although we were not there to see it, we must have it always before our eyes. We are asked, beginning in *v. 18,* to bear in mind always the great cost of our redemption in the humiliation and death of Christ. We were saved, "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." This was no "flash in the pan" because, although it could not be known until Christ appeared, it was part of God's eternal purpose. Man in Jesus' own time rejected him (*ch. 2: 4*), and that rejection was the price of our rescue. This constant reminder that we are so highly valued—God gave his Son for us—keeps us going at the present time.

There can be hardly any doubt that the speaker is thinking here of *Isa., ch. 53.* Many of the phrases are taken from the theme of the Suffering Servant of God. Yet Christ should not be recalled simply as an example, but should be known as one still living and active. Jesus is not a purely spiritual person about whom we can think anything we wish. This is the importance of remembering the actual Jesus as he is known in the Gospels.

There was already beginning in those days an attitude toward the Christian religion that tended completely to "spiritualize" the Christian faith in Jesus. The reasons are too complicated to go into here, but men found it difficult to believe that the holy and almighty God had come down to earth, had actually become a man, suffered in the most gruesome way, died, and entered the grave. They were willing to believe in Jesus only as a spiritual idea or ideal.

That is why we find here not only references to *Isa., ch. 53,* but such phrases as "being put to death in the flesh" (*ch. 3: 18*) and "Christ suffered in the flesh" (*ch. 4: 1*). It happened, it is true, in the past, but it is always to be brought into the present by recollection. If, as seems certain, I Peter was originally a baptismal address, it was most likely followed by a meal in which bread was broken and wine drunk for a memorial of the Last Supper. All through the Christian ages, whatever form that act has taken, it has always involved this recalling of the actuality of Christ's death on the cross.

Recollection and Anticipation

For the Christian, then, living *now* always involves recollection of the past and anticipation of the future. When we vividly recall Jesus in the present, the past is wiped out, so that again the author can say, "Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do" (*ch. 4: 3*). Again, in *v. 7* the author says, "The end of all things is at hand." This means that the Christian knows Christ will some day intervene again in the affairs of men. With him at that time we shall have to deal. Because of this, there is a sense in which the end of things is always present in everything. For the Christian, Christ is the final reality, and all else is under the threat of coming to an end.

It is interesting that these remarks come in a passage (*ch. 3: 13 to 4: 6*) in which the author has taken an early Christian hymn-like creed (or creed-like hymn) and inserted his teaching into it. The theme is, "Reverence Christ as Lord" (*ch. 3: 15*). The basic statement comes in *v. 18:* "Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." The next two verses have been debated more than any in the New Testament: "In which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water." We cannot solve them here, and there is no need that we should. (They are based on an old legend, perhaps on some of the ancient stories in Genesis.) Their meaning is clear. They say that when Christ died for the unrighteous in order to bring them to God, he did not die simply for those who lived at that time, nor only for those who have believed since, but for all men, everywhere, at every time, even those imprisoned in "Gehenna." This is a strange way in which to put it, but it is a tremendous proclamation that the death of Jesus is effective for all men. We can trust the gospel of Christ crucified because it is not in any way limited. If there is anything that can be done in God's mercy for those who have rebelled against him, God through Christ will do it.

At this point (*v. 21*) we come to a verse about baptism that brings the author back to the resurrection—from which he was distracted by the thought of the "spirits in prison." In *v. 22* the creedal statement is resumed: "Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him." The important thing about this creed is not the separate statements, but the meaning and purpose of the whole. We can see that at this early date, there already existed the statements that together have always formed the heart of the Christian creed. They correspond with the earliest Christian sermons found in *Acts 2: 22-36; 3: 11-26; 10: 34-43.* The gospel has always proclaimed that Christ died for sins, though he himself was righteous, that he was raised from the dead, that God has taken him to heaven and given him the position of power (this is meant by "at God's right hand"). This creed, as here and in The Acts of the Apostles, has always been associated with baptism. Into this faith Christians are everywhere baptized.

We see, then, how Christianity depends upon the recalling of the events that took place when Jesus was living. It is also concerned with the future and his connection with it. Those with whom the Christian can no longer associate will have to "give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (*I Peter 4: 3-5*). It is a basic factor in the Christian faith that Jesus cannot be forgotten as One who lived in the past, but must, instead, be anticipated as One with whom we have still to deal. So that the fellowship of the common loaf and the common cup is not only a memory of the Last Supper, but an anticipation of the time when he will sit down with his own at the banquet of the Messiah in the Kingdom of Heaven (see *Luke 22: 15, 28-30*). The United Church of South India properly provides this response for its people at the Lord's Supper: "Amen. Thy death, O Lord, we commemorate, thy resurrection we confess, and thy Second Coming we await. Glory be to thee, O Christ."

New Motivation and New Power

The fact of Christ and the constant thought of Christ makes the Christian a Christian. This present realization of relationship with Christ motivates the Christian's whole life—it covers his past, his present and his future. It is the living reality of every moment. It has always been a cause of offense. This is what is meant by the quotations about the "stone" in *I Peter ch. 2,* which were favorite Christian testimonies.

Although we may no longer have people who deny that Jesus was a real man and want to make him a sort of ghost, there are plenty of people about us who want to make our religion a purely spiritual affair. This it can never be. For one thing, it involves the reality of time. None of us are free from time. We are always concerned with the past and the future; the present is only the point at which we move from the one to the other. What the New Testament does is to put Jesus himself at that point, for he is our past and our future. Because he stands in the past where he suffered, he is able to deal with our past. Because he stands in the future where he is to be met by all men as Judge, he takes care of our future. We have already met with him, and he has already dealt with us—as Savior. The failure of a good deal of Christian life is that this past in Christ and this future in Christ do not really meet in the present.

What is often called the "sacramental" aspect of life becomes important at this point. We have seen how the speaker of this baptismal address is concerned, along with all the New Testament writers, about the actual relationships of life. There is an intense practicality about New Testament Christianity that is

very inconvenient for those who wish to believe in a purely spiritual religion. In the process of dealing with the actual stuff of life, we come to grips with the problems that make it necessary to say that we need to "be saved" or that we have "been saved." In dealing with the actual complications of life we discover the extent of our own inadequacies, our own insecurity, our own estrangements from people and God.

When we come to realize that this deep inner restlessness can only be satisfied by God himself and by restoring our relationship with him, we see that Christ is not only the most important person in the world's history, but in *our own* history. The whole epistle, read through, reminds us of that unusual combination of reality and expectation that is the essence of Christianity.

There is a new motivation, a new power at work in the Christian. "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God." (*Ch. 4: 1-2.*) The security of which we spoke in the first article is secure because it does not depend upon any human plan or human initiative. The spring of the action is with God.

What this epistle says has been corroborated in a winsome piece written not very long after I Peter was given to the church. It is found in "The Letter to Diognetus." There, in a simple and direct way, the thought is expressed that the God we had thought of as our enemy is, in reality, as we find in Christ, the One who is most concerned about us and most anxious to draw near us. The words have been translated as follows: "It is not an earthly discovery that was committed to them . . . . On the contrary, it was really the Ruler of all, the Creator of all, the invisible God himself, who from heaven established the truth and the holy, incomprehensible word among men, and fixed it firmly in their hearts. Nor, as one might suppose, did he do this by sending to men some subordinate—an angel, or principality, or one of those who administer earthly affairs, or perhaps one of those to whom the government of things in heaven is entrusted. Rather, he sent the Designer and Maker of the universe himself . . . . God sent him to men.

"Now, did he send him, as a human mind might assume, to rule by tyranny, fear, and terror? Far from it! He sent him out of kindness and gentleness, like a king sending his son who is himself a king. He sent him as God; he sent him as man to men. He willed to save man by persuasion, not by compulsion, for compulsion is not God's way of working. In sending him, God called men, but did not pursue them; he sent him in love, not in judgment." [1]

For this reason we can "invoke as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds" (*I Peter 1: 17*).

UNIT II

4

SHALL WE GET INTO TROUBLE?

Read *Acts 4: 13-31; I Peter 4: 12 to 5: 12.*

BEFORE we go on, we must pause to explain why we have said that this epistle probably belongs to the early part of the second century. There is one very strong reason. About that time a man named Pliny was governor of this region and the emperor in Rome was Trajan. The governor wrote to the emperor to find out what to do about those who were accused of being Christians. This was the first time, so far as we know, that people were put to death simply for claiming to be worshipers of Christ. This gave a great opportunity for people who had grudges against others or were business rivals or political enemies to inform against their neighbors, anonymously calling them "Christians." We know the emperor, unlike some of our own past leaders, did not like unsupported charges. Neither, it seems, did Pliny. He reported that he gave those who were charged three chances to plead "not guilty," finally warning them of execution unless they renounced Christ. If they refused to deny that they were Christians, then, he reports, he was forced to put them to death. He had tried unsuccessfully to find out what he could about this new religion. Those who recant are not very reliable witnesses, he discovered. He had come to the conclusion that Christianity was no danger to Rome. However, when people refused to give it up after three chances and warnings of capital punishment, he judged they deserved death for "contumacy" or obstinacy in defying the governor.

First Peter fits this period as it does no earlier time. It very probably was originally a baptismal address by a bishop (at least from *chs. 1: 3 to 4: 11*) and quite possibly had been given by Peter himself in Rome at an earlier date. (Some of its terms are similar to phrases associated with Peter elsewhere and with his speeches which you have read in The Acts.) It now has the form, however, of a letter, with a section added (*chs. 4: 12 to 5: 11*) that seems to have been called for by a persecution like Trajan's about the year 112. Other interpretations of the dating and authorship of I Peter have been advanced by reputable scholars. Although the dating of a New Testament writing cannot

[1] From *Early Christian Fathers,* Volume I of The Library of Christian Classics. "The So-called Letter to Diognetus," edited and translated by Eugene R. Fairweather. The Westminster Press, 1953.

always be established with complete certainty, some decision in this matter is called for. The author finds the above interpretation most convincing. The most essential matter for the reader, however, is the message I Peter contains.

Respect the Government—to a Point

We are sobered to find that the injunction to respect the government and its officials (*ch. 2: 13-17*) has suddenly become a very serious matter. The advice still holds—except for one thing. Christians cannot deny Christ. They have already been told (*ch. 3: 14-15*) to "have no fear of them, nor be troubled" (ever since Nero in the sixties there had been this possibility). All the same, they were to do two things: First, "in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord." This deep-seated allegiance would always make it impossible to give the ultimate allegiance of life to Caesar or to *worship* his office. (The word "Lord" meant both a master to be obeyed and also, at that time, a divinity to be paid acts of worship.) Secondly, they were to be "always . . . prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (*v. 15*). That is, they were to stand up for their new allegiance and explain why they followed Christ. (What would you say if put on trial *as a Christian?*)

The important thing was to live in such a way that they, as Christians, could not properly be punished for anything else. This would keep their witness clear. If they had "to suffer for doing right" (*v. 17*), "if that should be God's will," that would be better "than for doing wrong." It would be reproducing Christ's own experience of suffering wrongfully (*vs. 14, 18*—it is here, as we saw, that the creedal statement comes in). By the testimony of an impeccable life, the enemies would finally be "put to shame" (*v. 16*). This the Christians are to do "with gentleness and reverence" (*v. 15*).

It is worth noting that the method of resistance without violence that is suggested here was used by Gandhi to overcome the British in India. It is being revived in places today by minorities—or by majorities who lack all power except conviction that their cause is just. First Peter may be its earliest Christian application. Its ultimate basis is the Sermon on the Mount.

The issue and strategy are made clearer in *ch. 4: 14-16* (notice the words italicized below): "If you are reproached *for the name of Christ, you are blessed,* because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let *none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker;* yet if one suffers *as a Christian,* let him not be ashamed, but *under that name* let him glorify God."

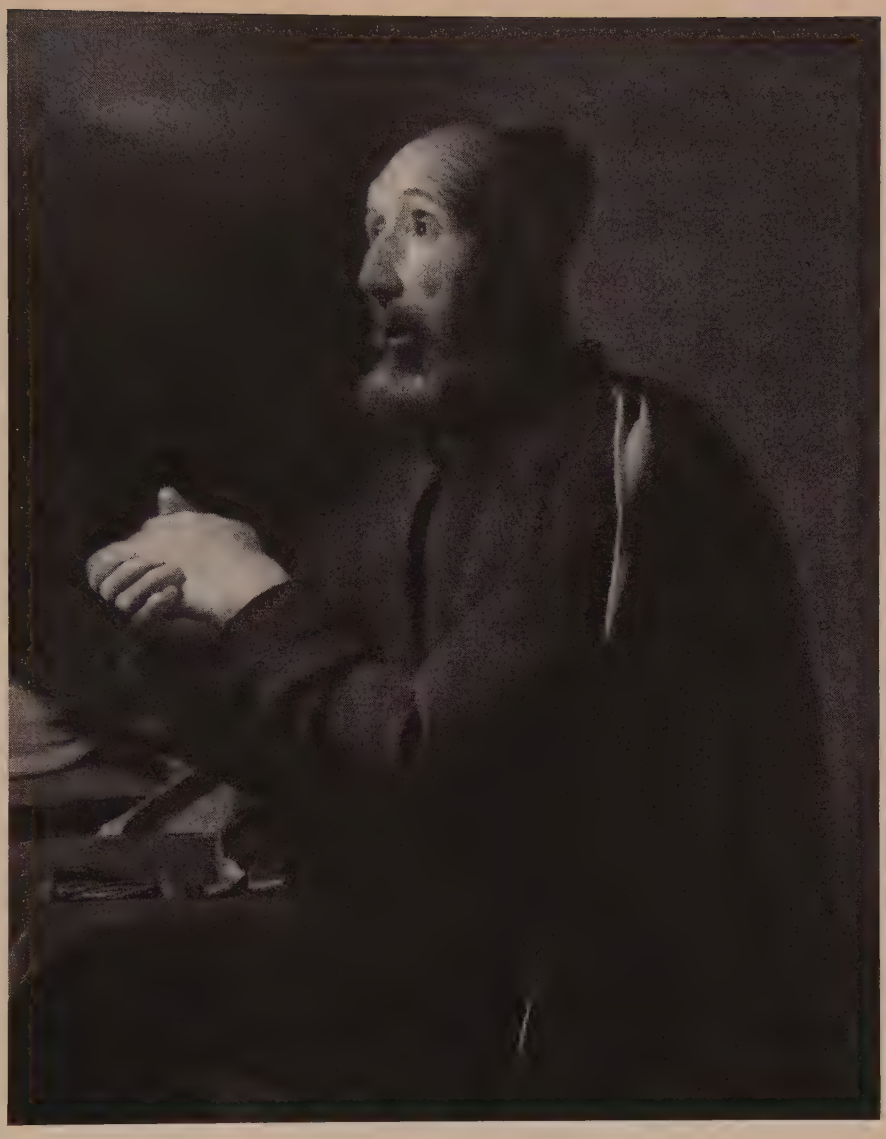
The point is clear. In the ordinary matters of respect for life, for property, for laws and morals, Christians are to be obedient to the government. To be punished for such crimes or misdemeanors does not benefit them or the Christian cause. In the matter of *final* allegiance only, in giving worship only to Christ, in claiming an calling on his name, there must be no compromise o wavering. If a person is punished simply for being Christian, there is no need to be ashamed; there i glory in it. Eventually, even the Roman Empire cam to see that in putting Christians to death it was ex terminating its best people and finest citizens. Th values of the heavenly citizenship of which we spok in the first article are made more precious by the dan gers involved.

We need not suppose that all such dangers are past The Nazi experience is too recent. Protestants in Co lombia, where a dictatorial church and a dictatoria state join hands, have been persecuted for their faith We do not know what the churches of Christ suffer i Red China. We know the scorn and difficulty that g with being a Christian in Russia. Real ostracism come to a Moslem or a Hindu who breaks away from hi ancestral faith to *become* a Christian. It could happe here. Would we have the loyalty to follow this epistl then? Is our faith a matter of life and death?

The Hidden Issue

A more subtle, perhaps greater, danger surrounds u as modern Christians. It might be summed up in question of this nature: "What is the issue?" o "Where do I take a stand?" The modern world hide the real issue under a gradual lowering of standards Only suddenly, when a glaring case of dishonesty o "rigging" or bribery or immorality or brutality be comes public, we realize how far from the Christia standard our society maintains itself. More than on national magazine has run articles of late on the col lapse of morals, some of them based on surveys, an they make almost terrifying reading. It is *our* societ that has slipped, of which *we* are part. Much of ou difficulty consists of locating the problem. Often whole attitude to life, a whole standard of values, is a fault, not any specific crime or any outspoken attac on Christianity. Subject to constant undiscernible ero sion, we suddenly find that there is no remaining mora soil.

What are called the "mass media"—radio, televi sion, motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, nationa advertising—tend to overcome our power of discrim nation and resistance. They create the impression tha "this is what everyone does." It is part of the impre sion that morals can be determined by statistics—i *enough* people divorce their mates or marry as teen agers or accept "payola" or cheat on their taxes or liv on credit to the point of chronic debt, these actions ar acceptable. They cannot be "wrong" if done by s many, especially if they help sell things and are goo for the economy. Stimulation of desire—whether fo two cars or for unrestricted pleasure—is in danger o being taken as normal because it helps produce an dispose of consumer goods. So arises the "great de bate" (but not started by the churches!) of whether o not we are spending too much on ourselves. We are ap



Detail from
THE REPENTANT
ST. PETER
By Georges de la Tour
(French, 1593–1652)

"For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God . . . ."
(*I Peter 4: 17*)

to overlook the cynical and calculated horror of the steady confusion and destruction of young people's values by those who peddle corrupting literature, songs, and other devices for cold cash.

We are confused also by our own virtues. We know we must not use force, must not stifle debate, must not countenance censorship nor deny the rights of free speech and an open market, must not use the church as a political or economic force. We manage, however, to state the case so that, in the attempt to avoid bigotry, we sound as though religion does not matter at all.

That is one part of the question I Peter raises—What is *our* authority, our final authority? Where is our treasure, our ultimate allegiance? There are other ways to put it. When do we make a stand—on what issue? At what point must we yield no more to still be loyal to Christ? What *difference* is involved in being a Christian? Or are we unwilling to *be* different—as though we were still adolescents, unable to act without the approval of our "peer group"?

These questions can be answered only by fellowship and prayer, with serious thought. "Keep sane and sober for your prayers," the epistle has said. First Peter affords a good basis for discussion. It keeps the final issues before us, it makes us aware of our real center and base as Christians, and it helps keep relationships from becoming lost in vague "relationship."

"Over Against the World"

In *I Peter, ch. 1,* we found the predominant theme to be joy and happy expectation. But, even there, the possibility of persecution came in. "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials." (*V. 6.*) When opposition is responded to in a Christian spirit, there should be two results. The "genuineness" of faith should be tested (*v.* 7). It should be shown to be "more precious than gold." And it should bring "praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

It has often been said, with some justice, that Chris-

tianity is not interested in this world, but only in the world to come, particularly in personal survival and life in heaven. To hold this, says the critic, makes people indifferent to present social problems and allows exploitation to go unchallenged. First Peter does speak of Christians as those who have their "home," their "final allegiance," elsewhere. But we have seen it is also interested in the ordinary relationships of life at home and at work. It counsels the followers of Christ to be loyal citizens so long as the government does not demand the worship that belongs only to God. The Christianity of this epistle is not "other-worldly." Neither is it "this worldly." It is rather an "over-against-the-world" religion.

As we said, I Peter did not, for example, raise the question of slavery as such. Nor did the early Christians discuss the position of women as such. They tried to deal with the relationships involved within the social pattern they knew. We must remember how obscure a group they were, practically in hiding. Eventually, however, Christians, and not secular politicians, attacked the structure of slavery as an institution. Many other social evils that arose in later times, like oppression in the factories, were opposed by Christians, until, under such men as Rauschenbusch, it was possible to speak of a truly "social gospel."

The striking thing about Christianity is that it is always renewing men's minds (*Rom. 12: 2*) and making them aware of evils they had not recognized as evils. There is no particular pattern of society under which Christians can live as Christians and no other. It was possible to live as Christians in the Roman Empire (at some risk), under feudalism, under monarchies, and it is possible in republics and democracies. It may be possible to live as a Christian in Soviet Russia or in China (under certain limitations). Our problem is equally severe. Can we live by Christian standards in a society in which the basic standards are economic, morals are becoming secondary to the pursuit of "the fast buck," and our popular heroes are entertainers who become rich overnight? Can we create a Christian pattern of life at a time when so many people's scheme of living is dictated by the business organization to which they belong and in which so many pressures of *status* are felt? The impact of secular points of view comes through the weight of mass media with resources of finance and glamour that the Christian churches have neither the skill, the money, nor the share of time to match.

In a sense, we have all become adolescents, afraid to move without group approval, uncertain of our convictions if they run against the popular current. Mature Christianity involves becoming capable of standing alone if necessary, related to another order and source of life altogether without being divorced from this one in which we must live daily. Our calling is to "maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (*ch. 2: 12;* see also *Matt. 5: 16*)

Christians are often too much like everyone else t be "spoken against." Only when direct oppositio arises are Christians forced to ask where they stan Direct opposition is unlikely to arise unless Christian speak out or take action that is noticeably Christia and distinct from secular or "worldly."

The Cost of Vigilance

It is all the more necessary, therefore, that Chris tians keep in touch with one another, so there can b discussion of what it means to live as a Christian i this time, in this society, and in each particular com munity. In fellowship in the church we can explore to gether the possibilities of action in areas in which, a too often, it is from *outside* the churches that the firs moves of protest are made. This attitude of constan self-criticism before God or reassessment of Christia truth in modern terms and awareness of the need fo action can best be summed up in an idea expressed i I Peter, *vigilance*. The idea appears in that part of th epistle most aware of the immediate danger of opposi tion to Christian loyalty.

The "vigilance" that is necessary and the sufferin it might cause are brought out in *ch. 5: 6-11*. In th earlier verses of this chapter we see that the "elders needed warning, for even religious leadership has it own dangers of unworthy pressure, money-makin and abuse of power. Even more than the ordinar Christian, those who hold office in the churches nee to "clothe [themselves] . . . with humility."

In one of the most moving moments of American re ligious history, *ch. 5: 6-11* served as commentary on venture in which leadership might have failed, excep for the minister of Christ. The first permanent settle ment of English-speaking people at Jamestown, Vi ginia, in 1607, was almost wrecked by dissension a much as by starvation, disease, and hostile Indian The efforts of the first settled minister, Rev. Robe Hunt, brought the leaders back together and ensure that Captain John Smith would be admitted to th Council and so make his invaluable contribution. T mark the reconciliation, the chaplain gathered the co onists about the Lord's Table. The "Epistle" for tha Sunday in the prayer book used at that time by th English church happened to be this passage of I Pete (as it still is). We can picture the enfeebled, ragge men, gathered around a rude pulpit and table under sailcloth among the trees, the guards watchful fo lurking savages, the leaders only now restored to ha mony. Many of the men were to sail back to Englan the next day, leaving the rest without friends or sup port in the wilderness. On all these counts the word fall with unusual emphasis:

"Submit yourselves every man one to another, kn yourselves together in lowliness of mind. For God re sisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble ... Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for yo

"Be sober, and watch: for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith: knowing that the same afflictions are appointed unto your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, which hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, shall his own self (after that ye have suffered a little affliction) make you perfect, settle, strengthen and stablish you."

This is the version read in 1607, which is older, of course, than the King James Version. The thought is clearer, but essentially the same, in the Revised Standard Version.

The image of the devil as a prowling lion makes vivid the pressure that we feel from all sides, but are often unable to locate. Yet we are not alone in our vigil. The watchfulness, the resistance, and the affliction are characteristic of our "brotherhood throughout the world" (*v. 9*). We are not alone, "for he cares about you" (*v. 7*). In the end we come back to the beginning—the final issue is not in doubt: "To him be the dominion for ever and ever."

There could hardly be a more important set of counsels for our time than those in The First Letter of Peter. We need just now to get back to first principles —the promise and pledge of our baptism, the nature of the Christian fellowship, the brotherhood of Christ's sufferings, the discovery of ultimate allegiance, the security of the final hope. Once we have meditated on this short book we shall come back to it again and again.

Unit III—The Work of the Spirit of God

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1

IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

Read *Acts, ch. 2.*

THE Biblical texts that contain references to the Spirit or spirit are so numerous and many-sided that no interpretation has been able to do justice to all of them. I do not, in these articles, pretend to have done better than others who have written on this subject. I have omitted formal discussions of many aspects of the subject that have occupied the attention of other writers. I have said nothing about the work of the Spirit in creation, or about "human spirit and Holy Spirit" (the title of a fine book by Prof. Arnold B. Come), or about Spirit and the Trinity (which exercised the mind of orthodox theologians).

In the following four articles I have dealt with the main line (as I see it) of the material having to do with "the Spirit of the Lord" in the context of "the history of redemption" in God's dealings with his people. I trust that such an approach to our subject is not only historically justifiable, but also relevant to the faith and life of Christian people in our day.

The first two articles deal with the Biblical material on the Spirit of God in the New and the Old Testaments. The next two articles are by way of interpretation and are intended to answer questions raised by the Biblical material.

The Beginning of the Church

According to the book of The Acts, the Christian church began to exist with the coming of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit as he had promised his disciples. The Spirit came upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, with a sound "like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (*Acts 2: 2-4.*)

So begins the "wonder-full" story of the Christian church. "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered . . . . And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others mocking said, 'They are filled with new wine.' " (*Vs. 5-6, 12-13.*) But Peter stood up with his fellow disciples and, in the power of the Spirit, boldly preached the gospel of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. When he finished, the people who heard him "were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest

of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (*Vs. 37-38.*) We are told that "there were added that day about three thousand souls." The writer of The Acts of the Apostles takes it for granted that these people both were baptized in the name of Jesus and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the writer, these two, baptism and the gift of the Spirit, are the two marks of the church. Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ leads to the forgiveness of sins, and it is from the gift of the Spirit that the common life of the church as it is characterized in *Acts 2: 42-47; 4: 32 to 5: 16; chs. 6; 10: 44-48; 11: 27-30,* follows.

When the first Christians received the gift of the Holy Spirit, they spoke "in tongues" (*ch. 10: 46*). The writer of the book of The Acts regards speaking in tongues as the most striking result of the gift of the Spirit, and apparently he was not alone in this view. The apostle Paul dedicates a long passage in his first letter to the Corinthians to the discussion of this subject and tries to temper the enthusiasm of his readers with good sense (*I Cor., chs. 12 to 14*). But even so, Paul, no less than the writer of The Acts, considers speaking with tongues a wonder-full gift of the Spirit. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, he writes, "Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything." (*Ch. 5: 19-21.*) Speaking in tongues and prophesying (which is like it) were considered by the first Christians as special marks of the church and primary evidences of the work of the Spirit.

These early Christians could hardly have been ignorant that ecstatic phenomena were not peculiar to their group. In fact, they were commonplaces of "the nature cults" of the Near East, in which the death and resurrection of the nature gods had been celebrated from time immemorial. But the speaking in tongues in the church was bound up with baptism in the name of Jesus, and it involved the gospel of his resurrection and coming to reign as God's Messiah. The Christians spoke in tongues, not for the raising of a dead god, but in "extolling God" (*Acts 10: 46*) in their joy over the fulfillment of God's promise of a new age in Jesus. The Christians spoke in tongues in their joy, and the ground of their joy was the gospel of the remission of sins, which they received by repentance. The meaning of the gift of the Holy Spirit, manifest in speaking in tongues, should be interpreted and understood in the context as the preaching and hearing of the gospel in the church.

The Boldness of the Apostles

However, we must not overlook the fact that neither the writer of The Acts nor any other New Testament writer (Paul, John, etc.) makes speaking in tongues the sole or the solely significant consequence of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The writer of The Acts, in the first chapter of his book, states Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit as follows: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (*v. 8*). This, in its way, sets down the theme of the book of The Acts: When Jesus "was taken up," he sent the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, in order that they might have the power to become his witnesses to the world. The chief gift of the Spirit to the apostles was the power to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. When Peter and John, after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate and their imprisonment, were released with orders "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus . . . , they were all [they and their friends] filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness." (*Ch. 4: 18, 31.*)

The book of The Acts, as well as the New Testament as a whole, is permeated with the sense of a deadly conflict between the disciples of Jesus and the society at large in which they lived and preached the gospel. They were railed against, stoned, flogged, imprisoned, threatened with death, run out of synagogues and cities, and in any and every way "persecuted." The Holy Spirit encouraged and comforted them. He called them to their several missions; he gave them speech, guided them, and gave them good success in the increase and establishment of the church. In short, for the writer of The Acts, the work of the apostles was the work of the Spirit, because it was the Spirit who gave the apostles "the power" to fulfill their mission in a hostile and overwhelming world.

The Spirit Upon the Son

According to The Acts and the Gospels, not only the disciples, but also their Master—Jesus the Messiah himself—was empowered to fulfill his mission by the gift of the Holy Spirit. In his speech at Caesarea, Peter spoke of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (*Acts 10: 38*). Luke, who wrote a Gospel as well as The Acts, makes it plain that the career of Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit are inseparable one from the other. The very birth of the Savior was the work of the Holy Spirit (*Luke 1: 35*).

Jesus began his mission with baptism. "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.'" (*Ch. 3: 21-22.*) When next Jesus was tempted by the devil, thus tested or tried for his work, he was "full of the Holy Spirit" and "was led by the Spirit for forty days." Since both the baptism and the temptations of Jesus are placed at the beginning of his work, it is safe to say that the gift of the Spirit in his baptism

nd the working of the Spirit in his temptations are ntended to characterize his mission as empowered by he Spirit. This becomes clearer when we consider that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Gali-ee" and that when he began his ministry in Nazareth, e read in the synagogue from Isaiah: "The Spirit of he Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to reach good news to the poor" (*Luke 4: 18;* see *Isa. 1: 1-2; 61: 1-2*).

According to Luke, Jesus performed his ministry as God's Anointed or Messiah and did his work "in the ower of the Spirit." When his healing work was inter-reted as done by the power of Satan, Jesus retorted: And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do our sons cast them out? . . . But if it is by the Spirit f God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (*Matt. 12: 27-28*). He con-emned refusal to see God's finger in his work as a lasphemy against the Spirit of God and branded it as he sin that "will not be forgiven" (*v. 31*). This argu-ent about Jesus' exorcisms, which is recorded in Mark (*ch. 3: 19-30*) as well as in Matthew and Luke, s strong evidence that Jesus' ministry was regarded n the early church as the work of the Spirit of God. nd so also were his resurrection from the dead (*Rom. : 4; 8: 11*) and, presumably, his ascension and sitting n the right hand of the Father. In short, Jesus Christ, ke his apostles, fulfilled his mission "in the power of he Spirit." Although he is indeed confessed in the ew Testament as the Son of God, who himself bap-izes his people "with the Holy Spirit" (*Mark 1: 8*), evertheless, in the Son's own conflict with the evil owers of this age, his sufficiency was in the Spirit.

The Spirit and Faith in the Church

What was true of Jesus Christ and the apostles was mphatically true of the church at large or the Chris-ians as the New Israel. The very confession of the saints" that "Jesus is Lord" was recognized by Paul s the work of the Spirit (*I Cor. 12: 3*). The whole point of being a Christian was to acknowledge that Jesus, who was "crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (*Acts 2: 23*) and "both died and was buried" (*v. 29*), was raised up by God (*v. 32*) and made by him "both Lord and Christ" (*v. 36*). Paul recognized that this thesis is "a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (*I Cor. 1: 23*) and that no man would accept it and believe it unless the wisdom and power of God exercised in the cross is revealed by God himself "through the Spirit" (*ch. 2: 10*). The doctrine that a man condemned and executed by the authorities of both religious and political institutions was the Christ and Son of God, Lord and Savior, is not acceptable to "the spirit of man" or "the mind of the flesh." It is contrary to "the wisdom of this world" and all the values of "the natural man." It is both comprehended and believed only by the working of the Spirit of God, who gives the Christian a new mind and a new heart. It was clear both to Paul and to the author of the Gospel of John (*ch. 3: 1-15*) that "unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*v. 3*) and that no one is born anew except "by water and the Spirit" (*v. 5*). It is hardly necessary to show in much detail that, since the Christian's faith is the work of the Spirit, so is his whole life. God "is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (*I Cor. 1: 30.*) Wisdom, righteousness, consecration, redemption, alike, which summarize the life of the Christian, are the work of the Spirit of God; so are "all joy and peace in believing" (*Rom. 15: 13*); also love, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (*Gal. 5: 22-23*); also all growth (*Eph. 2: 19-22*) and fortitude against "the world rulers of this present darkness" (*ch. 6: 12*). If Jesus Christ and the apostles were not sufficient to themselves, so also the household of God is not sufficient to itself. All power for wisdom, righteousness, consecration, redemption, in this world, is from God the Father, in the Son and through the Spirit.

UNIT III

2

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT IN ISRAEL

Read *Isa. 11: 1-9; 63: 1-14.*

THE coming of the Holy Spirit, which brought the church into being and endowed it with its faith nd life, was the fulfillment of the promises of God made to his people Israel. When Peter, in the first peech recorded in the book of The Acts, argued that peaking in tongues is God's work, he cited the rophecy of one of the Old Testament prophets (see *Joel 2: 28-32*):

"'And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.'"
(*Acts 2: 17.*)

The coming of the Spirit upon Jesus and upon his disciples and the gifts of the Spirit in the church, as discussed in the previous article, were all in line with the work of the Spirit in the history of Israel before the time of Jesus. It is therefore necessary to take a look at the Old Testament on our subject.

The Spirit Upon the Warriors and Kings

The outstanding fact about the Spirit of the Lord, as presented to us in the Old Testament, is that he came upon or entered or enveloped the servants of God who were called to be leaders, warriors, kings, or prophets in Israel. The greatest of God's servants, Moses, who brought Israel out of Egypt, gave the people the law of God, and led them through good and evil for forty years in the wilderness, had the Spirit upon him. When seventy elders were chosen to help Moses in his arduous labors, the Lord said, "I will take some of the spirit which is upon you and put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone" (*Num. 11: 17*). When Joshua was made Moses' successor, to lead the people into the Promised Land, "the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; cause him to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight" (*Num. 27: 18-19*). In a succession of wars with neighboring tribes, God raised judges or warriors and endowed them with his Spirit, so that they might overcome the enemies of his people and the land might have peace. Othniel rose against Mesopotamia (*Judg. 3: 10*), Gideon against the Midianites (*ch. 6: 34*), Jephthah against the Ammonites (*ch. 11: 29*), and Saul against the Ammonites and the Philistines (*I Sam. 11: 6; ch. 13*). When David was anointed and became king, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (*ch. 16: 13*). It is clear from the accounts of Saul's reign that the king owed his success in government as well as in war to the Spirit and that when the Spirit of God was withdrawn from him, he failed (*v. 14*). It is well to remember in this connection that when Isaiah prophesied the coming of the "Messianic" King, he spoke as follows:

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."
(*Isa. 11: 1-2;* cf. *ch. 42: 1.*)

The Spirit Upon the Prophets

If the warriors and kings of Israel were endowed with the Spirit of God, so were the prophets or spokesmen of God to the kings and the people. For good reason, prophets like Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, did not claim to have the Spirit of God. There were altogether too many mercenary and lying prophets who dreamed dreams and saw visions and claimed to have the Spirit of the Lord (*I Kings, ch. 22; Jer. 23: 9-40*). However, Elijah and Elisha are clearly under the power of the Spirit (*I Kings 18: 12; II Kings 2: 9-16*). Micah says,

"But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the Spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin."
(*Micah 3: 8*; cf. *Isa. 48: 16; Ezek. 2: 2; 3: 12; 11: 1, 5, 24.*)

It was the office of the prophet to speak "the word of the Lord." He was to speak according to God's law and will, uttering God's judgment and warnings and promises. This meant—in the presence of willful kings and their counsellors and in the midst of a confused and rebellious people who persistently turned away from their God—a constant exposure to controversy and conflict. We find the prophets prevailing by arguing for God and against their hearers. As the warriors fought against the enemies of God's people from outside, the prophets struggled against apostasy, injustice, and oppression within the land. Their task was no easier and no less demanding of courage and fortitude than the task of the warriors. It required equally the power of the Spirit of the Lord to speak the word of the Lord and to wield a sword against the Midianites and the Philistines. In either case, men struggled, but the power and the efficacy were the Lord's and were from his Spirit. The last word upon this main line of doctrine on the Spirit of God is the statement of the prophet Zechariah to Zerubbabel, who sought to free Judea from the Persians (ca. 500 B.C.): "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (*Zech. 4: 6*).

The Spirit Upon the People of the Covenant

Much of the material in the Old Testament presents the Spirit as coming upon individuals who are called to serve the Lord and fulfill his purpose, whether as warriors and kings or as prophets. Hence, it has been rightly observed that, before the founding of the Christian church, certain persons were endowed with the Spirit at given times and for specific purposes; whereas, after the founding of the church, the Spirit was given to God's people *as such,* to remain among them with his several gifts and to create and sustain the common life of the church. On the other hand, we must not overlook the fact that the doctrine of the abiding presence of the Spirit among God's people has deep roots in the Old Testament. According to one prophet, in "the days of old, of Moses his servant," the holy Spirit of the Lord was Israel's help and comfort in the wilderness:

"Like a horse in the desert,
they did not stumble.
Like cattle that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest."
(*Isa. 63: 13-14.*)

The Lord, by his Spirit, not only "divided the waters

before them," but also "led them through the depths," thus making "for himself an everlasting name" (*vs. 12-13*). The people of God were the beneficiaries of the Spirit of God, who protected them and guided them into the Promised Land. This is taken for granted by the prophet. However, the prophet's point in this passage is that the people "rebelled, and grieved [God's] holy spirit," and therefore the Lord "turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them" (*v. 10*). The people's own wickedness deprived them of the Spirit of God, and thus they have been left without the comfort of God. The absence of the Spirit is due to sin, not to God's proper will. It is a deprivation, not a withholding. For this reason, when the same (or another prophet) prophesies for the future, he says:

"Fear not, O Jacob my servant,
Jeshurun whom I have chosen.
For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit upon your descendants,
and my blessing on your offspring."
(*Isa. 44: 2-3.*)

Using another metaphor, Ezekiel, in the prophecy of the Valley of Dry Bones, speaks the word of the Lord, saying, "I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land" (*Ezek. 37: 14*). The same prophet has the Lord say: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you . . . . And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances." (*Ch. 36: 26-27.*)

The prophet Haggai addressed, not only the leaders of the postexilic Judea, but also the people, saying: "Take courage, all you people of the land . . . ; work, for I am with you . . . . My Spirit abides among you; fear not" (*Hag. 2: 4-5*). But this poor people of a Persian province had little enough reason for happiness or hope. All they could do was try to keep their identity and their traditions. The Spirit belonged to the more heroic ages of the past and to the future promised by the prophets. For the time being, there was no Spirit among them. There would be no Spirit until the coming of the Messiah. However, the point is that the Spirit of the Lord was absent from *the people*, not just from their leaders. He had been among them in "the days of old." He would be poured upon their descendants in the days of the Messiah to come. Then the people themselves would be filled with the Spirit. They themselves would come alive and obey the law of God and live in his peace. Such is the hope of Israel that the early Christians saw fulfilled in their midst.

According to *Isa. 59: 21*, the presence of the Spirit among God's people is a part of the covenant of God with them: "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, . . . from this time forth and for evermore." This verse, placed at the end of a chapter of judgment upon the people for their "works of iniquity" (*v. 6*) and before another chapter in which the prophet describes the future glory of Zion, shows that the whole life of God's people is to be seen as the work of God's Spirit, according to the word of God who has bound them to himself under an everlasting covenant. The people under covenant with God are also the people upon whom and among whom is the Spirit of the Lord; for all God's dealings with his people, according to his covenant with them, are by his word and his Spirit. He speaks, not as one "beating the air," but with power. He acts, not by a dumb power upon a dumb creation, but as the God of the covenant he has made with his people. So it is that the word of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord are inseparable one from the other; God speaks toward action and acts in order to speak to his people, for their faithfulness to him and to one another. Therefore, the presence of the Lord among the people of the covenant, who live by faith as well as by justice and mercy, is by the word and the Spirit. God, both as Creator (*Gen., ch. 1*) and Providence (*Isa. 51: 10; Ps. 104: 27-30; 68: 7-10; 139: 7-12*), is the Lord who does all his works by his word and his Spirit, because he is the Lord of a people who exist under covenant as God's intelligent creation or living souls.

We can hardly overestimate the fact that the working of the Spirit of the Lord was and has been among the people of the covenant. God did not merely create or make man. He "created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (*Gen. 1: 27.*) As we see in *Gen. 2: 15-17*, God created man as a responsible being: responsible to him and responsible for his fellow man. There is no human existence without responsibility, and responsibility means to be under covenant with God. So it was with Adam and Eve, and so it was with the people God called his own under Moses. In all his dealings with his people through his servants, by his word and Spirit, God at all times treated his people as responsible beings. He acted among his covenant people, not as a supernatural force, but by the power of his Spirit; so that his people might fulfill the covenant he had made with them, not as puppets, but in faithfulness—which is the exercise of humanity itself. The Lord acted as the Lord of the covenant; that is, he acted by his Spirit.

HOW THE LORD ACTS AMONG HIS PEOPLE

Read *John 3: 1-15.*

IN PRESENTING the Biblical material on the Spirit of the Lord in the preceding articles, our main question has been, "What, according to Scripture, did or does the Spirit do?" Our answer has been, first, that the Spirit of God enables God's servants, especially those who fought battles for God and ruled over his people and those who spoke the word of the Lord to his people, to fulfill God's purpose with regard to his people; secondly, that the Spirit has enabled God's people to live and act according to his covenant and purpose, in the knowledge of God and to his glory (*Ezek. 36: 22-32*). Questions that we ourselves ask, such as, "What is the Spirit?" "How is he related to God or to Christ?" "Is the Spirit a person or a ghost or a fluid?"—questions having to do with the nature of the Spirit rather than with his power and action—are not the concern of the Biblical writers. We get no clear answers from the Bible. This does not mean that we should not ask these questions, but it does mean that they should not replace the primary question about the working of the Spirit in God's self-revelation as "the living God."

Whether the Spirit Is an Entity or an Abstraction

This article and the next are to help to interpret the preceding two articles, which dealt with the main line of the Biblical teaching on the Spirit of the Lord. We hope that the interpretations will be both faithful to Scripture and helpful to readers.

The Spirit is the Spirit of God the Lord. This does not mean that there is a Spirit and there is God the Lord. On the other hand, the Spirit is not identical with God the Lord. The Spirit is not the Lord; nor is he another besides the Lord, *as though he were another God.* There is only one God, who is the Lord, and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord.

To speak of the Spirit as a thing—ethereal, fluid, or solid—makes no sense whatever. Such language points, not to a substance called the Spirit, but to the manner of God's action. When one says that the Spirit came upon, entered, clothed, or was imbibed by someone, we characterize the working of God the Lord. When we say that the Spirit is wind or air, something that flows, blows, or is poured, we characterize God's action. But the Spirit is no more action than he is an entity. If he is not a noun, he also is not a verb. Nor is he an abstraction, like "presence," or a part of a body, like an arm or a finger. He is not the power, wisdom, love, or any attribute of God, since Scripture presents him as the bearer of power and of other gifts of God. Hence, he is not an entity, and he also is not a state, attribute, action, or any qualification of an entity. In short, when we think in terms of things and their actions and qualities, we do injustice to the Spirit of the living God. There is no proper way to speak of the Spirit *in himself* or, for that matter, to speak of God in himself or of the Word of God in himself.

The Spirit cannot be abstracted from the Lord, on the one hand, and from those upon whom he comes and in whom he acts, on the other. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord, which comes upon or fills God's people. Although the Spirit is the Lord's, and the Lord himself acts by his Spirit, it is also true that the Lord—by his Spirit—acts by or through his servants. To try to have a conception of the Spirit apart from the people by and through whom the Lord does his mighty deeds or speaks his word is a misleading enterprise. How do we know of the Spirit of God apart from Moses and Saul and Elijah and Jesus and Paul? We do not know him apart from these men nor apart from the people of the Lord among whom he dwells and acts and produces certain effects, in warfare or government or prophesying or in faith, love, and hope. To speak about the nature of the Spirit apart from the deeds of God's people is to separate matters that, in Scripture, belong together. The Spirit of God came upon Jesus, and Jesus thereby entered upon and carried out his mission. It is from the mission of Jesus that we know the Spirit of God. We know the Spirit of the living God from the mission of Jesus, and so, too, we know him from the mission of the many servants of God.

Why the Words "Ruah" *and* "Pneuma" *Are Used*

The Bible speaks of the Spirit mostly in connection with kings, prophets, apostles, and Jesus the Christ. There is, apparently, a certain propriety in such speech. But what does this propriety consist of? What are the characteristics of the Lord's speaking and acting through his servants that make the original words of the Bible that refer to the Spirit appropriate? Why was the Hebrew word *"ruah"* or the Greek word *"pneuma"* even used? Why did not the Biblical authors simply say, "The *Lord* came upon Saul," or "The Lord spoke by the prophets"? The propriety of the Biblical speech about the Spirit arises from the manner of God's acting. "The Spirit" tells us, not only *that* God acts and exercises his power, but also *how* God acts and fulfills his will and purpose. There are peculiarities to the manner of God's speaking and doing

that make the use of the word "Spirit" appropriate. *"Ruah,"* for example, means "air in motion," as in our breathing or in the blowing of the wind. *"Pneuma"* also, as used in the Bible, has this meaning. Now, air in motion is invisible, unpredictable, sudden, powerful, and mysterious; so is the acting of God as he empowers his servants, gives utterance to his prophets, and turns his people to himself in faith and obedience. *"Ruah"* comes upon people when and where it will (see the story of Elijah in *I Kings, ch. 18,* and the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus in *John, ch. 3*). It comes suddenly, like the wind that arises without warning in the desert and whips at man and beast, forcing them to crouch and cover up. It comes with power, filling men with extraordinary energy, zeal, and courage, enabling them to overcome forces that would usually be overwhelming. It comes like the wind, as an invisible agent, and produces effects where man can see no apparent source of the action. And all this is, of course, a mystery that is experienced, but not comprehended. In short, the Bible speaks of *ruah Yahwe* or *pneuma tou theou,* because God's action is like the action of wind.

The Spirit of the Lord and Ecstatic Experience

However, we are not to limit God's action to wind-like behavior. The Spirit gives men wisdom in government, fills them "with ability, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship" (*Ex. 35: 31*), with faith, hope, and love. Neither the receiving of, nor the use of, such gifts need be accompanied by undue commotion. About the quieter workings of the Spirit, the Bible speaks of "being filled," of "pouring" and "drinking." In most instances (except in the accounts of the early "prophets" of Israel and of those who spoke in tongues in the early church), the Biblical writers are concerned, not with the ecstatic phenomena, but with their consequences in the realization of God's covenant and purpose. Ecstasy, induced through music and dancing and whirling, was a common phenomenon in early Israel (*I Sam. 10: 5-6, 10; II Kings 3: 15-20;* cf. *I Kings 18: 20-29*), but there is no evidence that it was a necessary element in prophecy or in government or the exercise of wisdom, judgment, or skill. The promised Messiah was not expected to undergo ecstasy; nor did he undergo it when he came (*Isa., chs. 11; 61; Luke 4: 16-21*). Paul was capable of ecstasy, but he did not consider it essential to the Christian life. (*I Cor., ch. 14.*) Peter does not seem to have been an ecstatic. Some in the early church spoke in tongues, and others received other gifts. (*I Cor., ch. 12.*)

If a man were to try to set down a generalized description of the experiences of the Spirit as given in the Bible, he would fail. The crucial signs of the presence and activity of the Spirit, according to Scripture, are the enabling of man to fulfill the purpose of God and the faithfulness, courage, hope, strength, love, joy, peace, that accompany doing God's will. Indeed, the self-realization of God and the coming of his Kingdom are properly accompanied by ecstasy, by a man's becoming "rapt in God," together with joy and exultation, with praise of God and worship of God. The words *"ruah"* and *"pneuma"* characterize God's action, not the emotional or ecstatic state of those who participate in that action. There is a *theology* of the Spirit that seeks to understand God's action and man's response in action. But there is no "psychology of the Spirit" by which a man can set down the emotions that accompany the coming of the Spirit and man's response to it.

The Spirit of the Lord and the Servants of the Lord

The second element in the peculiarity of God's action is God's use of human beings. When the wind blows, human beings try to find shelter from it. If a wall or a rock is nearby, they run and hide behind it. If there is no place for shelter, they crouch and cling to the ground. But when the Spirit of God comes upon men or envelops them, they act altogether differently. The Spirit is not a driving natural force that annihilates the power of a man. The action of God is not a substitute for the action of a man. The Spirit does not turn the servants of God, or the people of God, into leaves or feathers being blown about by an irresistible and overwhelming wind. God's almightiness is not the power of a tornado or a flood, which carries off anything and everything in the way. God's omnipotence is the omnipotence of the Lord God of Israel and the church, the omnipotence of One who performs his mighty deeds through the faithfulness and the zeal of his servants.

Jesus went to John the Baptist to be baptized by him. When he was baptized and "came up out of the water, . . . the heavens opened," and the Spirit descended "upon him like a dove." (*Mark 1: 9-10.*) Jesus came, and he was baptized and received the Spirit for the fulfillment of his mission. Neither at this point, nor at any other time until his death, was Jesus' exercise of his powers as a human being replaced by the exercise of God's power. When the Spirit came upon him, Jesus still acted as a faithful human being in the love of God and his neighbor. There is no notion in the Gospels that it was at any time God who was acting and not this man Jesus. There is no notion that Jesus was puppet or tool. On the contrary, Jesus was God's Son and Servant, and he acted as such, believing in God, obeying and doing the will of God. Jesus loved with the love of a man, spoke with the tongue of a man, stretched out his hand of flesh and bones. And so he healed diseases, cast out demons, forgave sins, restored men to their God and to one another. Throughout all of this, a human being was acting in faith and compassion.

The Lord God did not push Jesus aside and take matters into his own hands. He did not perform miracles like a "supernatural being" of men's confused and

deluded imaginations. God performed his mighty acts of healing, forgiving, and saving through Jesus as he went about healing, forgiving, and saving; the people heard the gospel preached and responded in faith. It is indeed true that Jesus acted as God's Son and Servant, as called and enabled by God. Neither he nor his believing contemporaries would have denied this. They would have held it true and certain. Still, there can be no doubt about the authentic humanity of Jesus in life, manner, and action.

Through Jesus' ministry, God overcame the devil and his works and revealed his own Kingdom. Jesus knew this, and the people knew it, for they knew that no man is a match for sin, the devil, disease, and death. The people knew that the authority and the power were God's, and they glorified God for his mighty work by the hand of his "prophet" (*Luke 7: 11-17*). So it was with Moses and Gideon, Isaiah and Paul. Kings govern, prophets speak, artists "create," wise men utter wisdom; and the Lord God by his Spirit gives success. The Kingdom of God and the zeal of his servants are, in God's wisdom, inseparable.

UNIT III

4

THE "PERSON" OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

Read *John 14: 25-31; Rom., ch. 8.*

THE Lord so acts that his Spirit is discerned in the faithfulness of his people. It is not hard to see the wisdom of God in preferring this method of action to one that might exhibit him as a "supernatural power." If his purpose were to show forth his power in order to inspire fear or to give men hope of escaping natural evils, especially death, he would have performed mighty physical deeds for the people's mere surprise and astonishment. He would not have taken a people to himself and called a succession of servants to act as his agents. But, since the purpose of God was the faithfulness of his people to him and to one another, it was fitting that he should have done his saving and edifying work through the faithfulness of his servants.

The Spirit of Faithfulness

The Son of God who came saving sinners was himself, therefore, a man faithful to God and to his neighbor. It would not have been appropriate for his mission for him to be a god and not a man. It would have been absurd for the people to hear the word of God through some supernatural messengers and not through the Lord's faithful prophets. It would have been incongruous for the people to be brought out of Egypt by an angel and not by Moses or to have a demigod and not David for king. A Peter and a Paul had to be apostles, and a Matthew and a Luke had to be Gospel writers. All this had to be so, by the wisdom of God and his goodness. And all this *was* so, for the self-revelation of the living God to the living souls who were his people.

The wonder of the Spirit of the Lord is the wonder of God's peculiar omnipotence, which he exercises through human beings who, in their faithfulness, act as God's servants and the means of his grace toward his people. God's grace has no other end than that men should know the living God and abide in his Kingdom by love. The Lord who acts in this way is the Lord who acts by his Spirit; without his Spirit he does not act. We know and acknowledge the Spirit when we know and acknowledge that God is the One who creates and sustains our very life as his people. The joy, excitement, and ecstasy of the Christian life lies in our being called to exist as human beings and fellow men who may give to our neighbors and receive from them the power of life that comes from God alone. This is joy in the Holy Spirit, as well as peace and hope, and *every* gift which enters into our existence as human beings (*Rom. 15: 13*).

The Spirit in the Church

It is evident from our preceding Biblical study that we have no knowledge of the Spirit of God or of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus Christ sent into his church without the ministry of God's servants in our behalf. The Spirit came upon Jesus, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul. If the Spirit had not come upon them, clothed them, entered them, filled them, if they had not in faith and zeal gone forth to serve the Lord and his people, how could we know that there is a Spirit of the Lord? If we ourselves were not in the church, in "the communion of saints," participating in the life of the church so as to be the beneficiaries of the faith and hope and love of our fellow men, we could have no experience of the Spirit of the living God, we could know nothing of the joy of those baptized in "the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy [Spirit]." Without the life and faith of the Christian community, we might have some sort of religious experience or ecstasy, such as the Hebrews found among the Canaanites (*I Kings 18: 20-29*) or the early Christians found in the "mystery religions" of the ancient Near East. But without the ministry of the body of Christ, we could not know the Spirit of the Lord, who restores us to our God and to our fellow men in love by the forgiveness and building up that are in the mutual ministry of God's people. In short, when we say the Spirit, we are not to think of some windlike substance, but of the Lord God, of Jesus Christ, of our fellow men.

As the word of God cannot be thought of properly apart from Jesus Christ and the prophets and evangelists and apostles, so the Spirit of God cannot be thought of properly apart from the "communion of saints." If we try to understand the doctrine of the Spirit and ignore our fellow Christians, who are God's servants for our sakes, and ignore ourselves, who are God's servants for their sakes, we are bound to misunderstand the meaning of the Spirit. Without our neighbors and ourselves as living witnesses to the experience of the Spirit, our conception of the Spirit becomes a ghostlike blur, and we scarcely know what we are talking about. Without faithfulness toward God the Lord, toward Jesus Christ, and toward our fellow men, there is no Christian knowledge of the Spirit of God.

As Jesus is the Word of God incarnate, and we do not know God's word without him, so Christian fellow men are the bearers of the Spirit of God, and we do not know the Spirit without them. As God was not above having his Word become "flesh" and dwell among us "full of grace and truth" (*John 1: 14*), so this same God is not above making his people, sinners though they be, bearers of his Spirit and ministers of his toward one another. Just as to know Jesus as the Lord is to know the Word of God, so to know one another as members of the body of Christ is to know the Spirit of God. This does not mean that we are the incarnation of the Spirit as Jesus is the incarnation of the Word. Jesus is the Savior, and we are the saved. But, as sinners being saved, we are, by God's grace, bearers of the Spirit. This is the wonder and mystery of being Christians. This is our life and joy, that we, as fellow men and by the Spirit of God, should be co-workers with God in the coming of his Kingdom. Therefore, to refuse to see the Spirit in our fellow men and their ministry toward us is to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, and that is "an eternal sin" because it is the repudiation of the peculiar wisdom and power of God.

The Freedom of the Christian People

The fact that Jesus was "the Word incarnate" does not mean that he was not a man who acted with the faithfulness of a man, as a responding and responsible man. So also the fact that a Christian is a fellow man in whom dwells the Spirit of God (*I Cor. 3: 16*) does not mean that he is to act in any way other than that of a human being, in the responsiveness and responsibility of a human being. The saving act of God is automatic in the sense that it originates in him, in his love and freedom toward us. But it is not automatic in the sense that it works, as we say, "automatically" or as though the people of God among whom the Spirit of God works were devoid of intelligence and will. In our judgment, it has been a deadly error, contrary to Scripture and to experience, to think that God's action is a substitute for man's action or that God is active and man passive in the restoration of man to fellow manhood in God's Kingdom. The wonderful reality of the Christian's mission is that he *may*, under his baptism and in the church, respond to the call of God to be his servant. My neighbor is not my servant willy-nilly, and I am not his servant by being coerced by a supernatural power. The communion of Christians with God and with one another is a matter of freedom, of "we may," of being able to forgive and to be forgiven, of being able to love and to be loved. The Spirit is the Lord's, and so are the power and the glory; and we may not boast in ourselves. But such is the working of the Spirit that our neighbor may forgive and love us and we ourselves may forgive and love our neighbor.

Love is the doing of a responsive and responsible agent, or it is no love at all. We rejoice in the love of our fellow men because it is a matter of decision in our behalf, a decision to acknowledge us as fellow men. There is a "social process" of responding to one another that is grounded in the love of Jesus Christ; in this process human love is evoked by human love. Scriptures enjoin us repeatedly to love one another, to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave" us (*Eph. 4: 32;* see also *Matt. 5: 43; 22: 37-39; John 15: 9-17; I Peter 1: 22*). The loving community as well as the "beloved community" is the proper setting of that ability to love that is the work of the Spirit.

Christians are to help one another to become free to love. Thus they are to co-operate with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With the help and comfort of their brothers, they *may* love, and they may show their love in many ways: in justice, kindness, and patience. It is true, as Christians have insisted, that "every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (*James 1: 17*). But it is no less true that "every perfect gift" is from the Son and the Spirit, and if from the Son and the Spirit, then through the faithfulness of God's servants, who are to "build one another up" (*I Thess. 5: 11; Rom. 14: 19; Eph. 4: 11-16*). In short, we rejoice in the Spirit because our neighbor may love us and we may love him in the church. We may be faithful, and we may love, not as though we were sufficient, but because we are members of Christ's body and the beneficiaries of God through our fellow men. So we may hope with a hope that is the beginning of its own fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.

The Spirit of the Lord and My Neighbor

There has been much hesitation and confusion as to the gender of the Spirit of God. When speaking of the Spirit, some say "he" and some say "it," without much rhyme or reason. Let us say "he" when we speak of the Spirit of the living God, so that we may think of him as he is in and acts through our fellow men whom God has made his co-workers and our ministers and as he is in and acts through us who are his agents in the "ministry of reconciliation."

The Christian Round Table

MEN, it seems, have always had a craving to *know*. To know what? Why, just to know about everything—life, the universe, people, events, what makes the world and what makes it go around. Name any topic, theory, idea, creature, thing, or movement that can be perceived or conceived by the mind of man, and that is one of the things men want to know about, understand, and, where possible, utilize. Why are we driven to this never-ending personal task of climbing the mountain of reality? As the mountain climber answers every time, "Just because it's there."

The following units in *The Christian Round Table* talk about ways of knowing. Unit I contrasts the scientific outlook and the outlook of faith. In Unit II several young adults talk about their objective examination of the "outer" world and reflect some of their subjective exploration of the "inner" world. Unit III suggests that men's search for God is fruitless, for God reveals himself to men in Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit enables men to receive that revelation and live in faith.

UNIT I

Science and the Christian Faith

By John E. Burkhart

1: THE MAGIC OF SCIENCE

"WE LIVE in an age when not to be scientific is to be nothing." These words, written in 1872 by the poet Swinburne, could have been spoken last week by some statesman seeking greater scientific training for our students so that we may more adequately face the technological demands of national security. We all live in a "scientific age." We spend our days in scientifically designed buildings, eating scientifically prepared food, and earning the money with which to purchase scientifically designed commodities, commodities that are advertised according to scientific analyses of our needs and wants. The man of our time who turns his back on science is either deluded or dishonest. Unless one has his own spring, even the water he drinks will—like it or not—come to him as a result of scientific techniques of pumping and purification. To renounce science is no longer a live option. Science shapes our lives.

It is no wonder that certain tensions have arisen between science and the Christian faith. In many ways, science seems to have taken the place of religion. Something has happened to religion's traditional functions. For instance, we no longer turn to the Bible to discover the shape or the placement of the stars. We seldom if ever pray for rain; we simply sprinkle the clouds with dry ice. We no longer anoint the sick; we administer drugs or use the surgeon's knife. We scarcely even bless our food; we process, test, and enrich it.

No one would dare question the obvious gains; but what is our loss? How does it balance out? Before we can answer the question, we have some hard thinking to do about the meaning of "science" and about the nature of the Christian faith.

From Fate to Mathematics

In his stimulating book, *The Promise of Science and the Power of Faith* (The Westminster Press, 1958; $3.00), M. Holmes Hartshorne has a chapter on "The Magic of Science." He suggests that "magic is essentially a means of controlling the powers of nature for human ends." He then proceeds to show that, although men have always had to contend with the forces of nature, they have done it in various ways. In ancient civilization, the Greeks tended to take the facts and forces of nature as part of their *fate*. The science of astronomy was born in part from a curiosity about the stars, which were supposed to control man's fate. Man's future as fate was concealed in the stars, and the course of one's life lay in the course of the

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stars. Few men would have agreed with Cassius that

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves . . . ."

During the Middle Ages, nature wore a friendlier face. All was finally under the *providence* of God, who worked with and through the forces of nature for his own good ends. Although the rain might seem to fall on the just and unjust, God was at work, and his purposes for the church would not fail. Such a faith gave assurance to believers, but it also restricted the growth of science. For if science began to interfere with the providential processes of nature, then science was to be condemned.

In this medieval outlook there was a mixture of good and bad. It was good in that faith in God's providence militates against superstition. Nature is an orderly process. It is predictable. Its very orderliness is taken as proof of the existence of God.

Whether the order "proves" God or not, the assumption of order was a necessary ingredient in the growth of science. Only an orderly world is subject to fruitful study and prediction. But the medieval outlook was bad in that it was opposed to the transformation of nature for human ends. Andrew D. White's monumental work, *The Warfare Between Science and Theology in Christendom,* is filled with sorry chapters that express his opposition—an opposition that arose from the medieval faith—to such interferences with nature as the use of anesthetics in childbirth. Many such illustrations could be gathered, and one does not need to look far into this medieval faith to see the roots of present-day Roman Catholic opposition to such practices as "artificial" methods of birth control. The result of the medieval view was to place God over man and nature in such a way that the sheer weight of the divine pushed man down into nature, that is, made him subject to "natural law."

It was this submerging of man in nature that the Renaissance reversed. Man was still part of nature, but he was freed to grapple with it. And in this new grappling he first turned to what Hartshorne calls "demoniacal magic." As Marlowe's Doctor Faustus put it,

"Philosophy is odious and obscure;
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three. . . .
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me."

Renaissance man, freed from God's order and captivated by magic, fell captive to disorder. But the demons did not last. They gave way to less personal and more orderly powers. The revival of Greek thought brought a rebirth of astrology. The stars at least were orderly and even predictable; so demoniacal magic gave way to "natural magic." As nature was seen to be orderly, it became a system of facts. These facts were interrelated by cause and effect and hence made subject to mathematical statement. Furthermore, it was not merely possible to collect and assemble facts about the present. If the present could be described, the future could be predicted. The existence of a comet could be established, its path plotted, and its appearance predicted with accuracy. Mathematical *description* and *prediction* did much to overcome man's superstitious fear of nature. In addition to description and prediction, modern man developed his ingenious capacity for carefully isolated *experimentation* and established the roots and genius of modern science. Freed from superstition about nature, man is now able to describe, predict, and even control much of what goes on in the natural world.

Modern science has grown and flourished. It has freed man from superstition and has unlocked many of nature's secrets, so that nature is no longer an incomprehensible or uncontrollable mystery. In ancient times it was thought that the "cosmos" (the universe) included man and nature in such a way that man was part of nature and subject to it. But the medieval man, because of his faith, began to realize that nature is not man's fate. The medieval mind saw life as a definite hierarchy consisting of God, man, and nature, in that order, with man somehow merged into a nature with which he must not interfere. The Renaissance man began to explore, and he discovered that nature is not inexorably hidden in the *secret counsels of God.* In the last four centuries man has come to realize that nature is subject neither to demons nor to natural powers. Nature has become an observable and predictable object. Nature is an object, nothing more, and it is increasingly subject to man's control. The full flowering of the Renaissance in the modern "scientific world view" sees man as a Prometheus who can describe, predict, and control nature with a rational and experimental power wrested from the gods. Man is the master of his fate and the captain at least of nature—if not of his soul.

The Magic Wand

We do not fully appreciate the thrust and threat of modern science until we see that its whole force is to make God unnecessary. The man of science *as scientist* has no need for God. God is, as one put it, "a hypothesis we can do without!" For the man of science, a mystery is not a "no-trespassing" sign erected by God or nature. There is no forbidden territory. What is now a mystery must not long remain so. A "mystery" is a challenge, an opportunity. Vigorously and relentlessly, the scientist must and will press on until he unlocks the secret and captures the gains. The captivating magic of science is such that, having firmly grasped its wand, a man cannot honestly let go. And, for good or ill, we are all men of a scientific age. What science means for the Christian faith will never be fairly answered until we appreciate the growth, gains, and claims of modern science.

2: THE MEASURE OF MAN

For many modern thinkers, the magic of science has given man a new status in the universe. He is no longer submerged in nature, subject to its fate or caprice. He can progressively bring nature under his control. He can manipulate nature to his own ends. He is released from superstition and servitude. He is free to create his own meanings and purposes. If the character and goal of life is still a riddle, it is a riddle that can be solved. The answer may not yet have been found, but it is certainly discoverable. Simply give man time enough, put enough trained men to work on the problem, and the answer will appear!

The unbounded optimism expressed in much of modern thought rests in the progress of science. For example, here are some words from a broadcast by Sir Lawrence Bragg:

"Power to control nature is not in itself civilization, but it is the foundation on which civilization is built. Each time that this power has been increased in the past, it has made possible a richer life . . . . What has happened in the past will happen again." [1]

In view of the increasing stack of facts, it is no wonder that many have begun to think of science as the world's savior and not Jesus Christ. It is not difficult to collect evidence supporting the thesis that the Christian church has kept men chained to ignorance and even superstition. We may say that the medieval mind offered ingredients necessary to science (such as belief in the orderliness of nature), but such talk cannot undo the sorry story of the church's ignorant persecution of scientists. The fact is that modern man gained his hard-won freedom to investigate and control nature at the expense of anguished cries of blasphemy. Although few would now want to renounce man's current freedom over nature—for instance, in the advance of modern medicine, yet conscientious Christians fought these advances almost step by step as invasions of the "secret of life." Man has bought his freedom from the church and wants to live with it.

Three Scientific Outrages

But man has bought his freedom at a price. Having surrendered the restrictions imposed by the medieval mind, he has also lost something of the meaning of his life in the scheme of things. Medieval man lived in a cosy cosmos. He stood near the center of the universe, with God above in the heavens and with hell beneath. The earth was flat and Jerusalem was at the center. With Jerusalem so centrally placed, God's acts for man were the central acts of the universe. Vertically, the cosmos was tidy, with God, angels, heavens, the church, man's intellect, man's body, animals, vegetables, and inanimate nature all in properly descending order. Horizontally, the cosmos was appropriately arranged around the cross, with Christians, barbarians, and water in concentric circles outward.

With the Renaissance, however, the picture began to be altered, and the very fabric of meaning started to give way. The earth was round, with Jerusalem no longer at the center. That was a blow, though hardly felt, for soon even man was no longer at the center. Not only was the earth round, but it was not even the center of the universe. With Copernicus, men found the sun rather than themselves at the center. Then with Bruno, space became infinite. This was too much, and Bruno was burned at the stake. But the damage had been done, and neither man nor the church could recover. To be sure, Bruno believed that God was everywhere and in everything, but man was homeless. Soon God was to be homeless too, for it is not far from saying that God is everywhere to saying he is nowhere in particular and, if nowhere in particular, then nowhere at all.

Man now stood alone, with a vanished God above and an unfriendly nature all about. Man was free, free to construct his own meanings. Man was supreme. He had stolen fire from the gods, only to be burned by it.

But then came Charles Darwin with the cruel message that man was submerged in nature. Man was a complex variety of animal. His mind was perhaps a bit more refined—that was a matter for further study, but whether a "rational animal" or not, man was still an animal.

The clock seemed to be turning back to another time. The medieval mind had told man that he was only slightly more than a part of nature. He was a rational animal with a soul. The Renaissance had answered that man's intellect is supreme, only to be undercut and have the facts driven home by Darwin. One blow to man's dignity followed another, until finally a physician named Sigmund Freud drove home the hardest blow of all to homeless man. Even man's precious and final possession was precarious. Man's reason was infected with the strange and curious forces of nature that lurked in the recesses of his mind. Man had no dignity left. Freud summed up the results:

"Humanity has in the course of time had to endure from the hands of science two great outrages upon its naïve self-love. The first was when it realized that our earth was not the center of the universe, but only a tiny speck in a world system of a magnitude hardly conceivable . . . . The second was when biological re-

[1] Quoted in *Christian Faith and the Scientific Attitude*, by W. A. Whitehouse. The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1952.

search robbed man of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created and relegated him to a descent from the animal world . . . . But man's craving for grandiosity is now suffering the third and most bitter blow from present-day psychological research which is endeavoring to prove to the 'ego' of each one of us that he is not even master in his own house, but that he must remain content with the veriest scraps of information about what is going on unconsciously in his own mind." [2]

Such is the curious course of modern science. An enterprise that began by asserting man's freedom over nature ends by asserting his submergence in nature. A science that began by dispensing with God to make room for man over nature finally loses man in nature. Apparently man has been freed from his chains only to forge new chains for himself.

The Evidence

If "the magic of science" points to the grandeur of man in his ability to describe, predict, and control nature, "the measure of man" offered by the successive insights of Copernicus, Bruno, Darwin, and Freud points to the misery of man homeless in nature. Any discussion of science's impact on modern life must take both this grandeur and this misery into account. Both the optimists and the pessimists are wrong. The optimists have tended to make the overconfident suggestion that man can be dealt with almost as easily as nature. According to them, if we would just go at the problems of man with as much vigor as we go at other problems, we could somehow bring about a situation of rational brotherhood and human understanding. The pessimists, on the other hand, have tended to overlook the fact that it is man who has learned to explore the external world and the world of the mind. The man who is homeless may yet find ways of constructing a tolerable home for himself.

In any case, as Christians we must face these two alternative views of life, offered as they are in good faith by men of intelligence and integrity. The issues cannot be written off or laid on the table. There are honest men who have taken time to ponder the evidence deeply and, as a consequence for them, have renounced their faith in God. There are other honest men who have renounced even their faith in themselves. If the evidence is correct, *we cannot honestly return to the medieval picture* of an orderly hierarchy of God, man, and nature, couched as it was in prescientific astronomy and geography. *Nor can we even honestly return to the Renaissance picture* of Promethean man, expressed as it was in prescientific anthropology and psychology. Neither medieval Catholicism nor classical humanism is for us an honest option. The whole pattern of medieval thinking, tied to the world view of Aristotle, was refuted by Copernicus and Bruno. Then the whole pattern of Renaissance thinking, tied to man's Promethean freedom from nature, was refuted by Darwin and Freud. We cannot act as if these men had never happened. These men came and made their contributions. We cannot be "flatlanders" in a "space age." We cannot be serenely rational in an "age of anxiety."

We must grapple with the *evidence,* lest we be dishonest. We must *grapple* with the evidence, lest we be stupid. As Christians, we must grapple with the evidence so that our devotion may be honest and intelligent. An uninformed faith is as vulnerable as a dishonest faith is despicable. Here now is our problem: How can we be intelligent and honest Christians in an age of science? Science is a product of thinking. We have thought ourselves into a problem. Can we think our way out?

We cannot be serenely rational in an "age of anxiety."

[2] From *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis,* by Sigmund Freud ($3.95). Permission of Liveright, Publishers, N.Y. Copyright: (R) 1948, S. Hoch.

3: THE EBBING TIDE OF FAITH

THE two previous articles of this unit have been devoted to an exploration of two fundamental issues: (1) it is important to understand something of the growth of modern science as it has freed man from superstition and servitude; (2) it is important to glimpse something of the new image of man's status as it has been created from the results of modern science. The present article sketches out some of the attitudes that have been taken by Christians in response to the growth, gains, and claims of modern science.

Assent and Dissent

In his searching and melancholy poem "Dover Beach," Matthew Arnold gave a portrait of the ebb of faith in the face of scientific advance:

> The Sea of Faith
> Was once, too, at the full . . . .
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating, to the breath
> Of the night-wind . . . .

Arnold said it well. In many ways, the history of Christian thought in modern times is the tale of a vast retreat. Time and again, in the face of repeated scientific advances, it has seemed impossible to hold the tide of faith at its full. Many have found themselves stranded between the forces of fact and faith. Often, the only ones who remained untroubled were those not alert enough to see what was happening. Strangely enough in this, ignorance was—and undergirded—bliss. The problems were lively only for the intelligent, although even among the unintelligent there was often a sneaking suspicion that all was not well. For too many people this suspicion led to a kind of Christian "anti-intellectualism," a kind of pretense that the problems would vanish if they were simply ignored. After all, a conflict between faith and fact, devotion and honesty, could hardly arise if one shut one's eyes to the facts. Then, too, there was always the cherished hope that the scientists might be wrong.

Apart from such anti-intellectualism, the most vigorous protest in the face of modern science came from "orthodoxy." The word itself gives the clue. It comes from *orthos* (correct) and *doxa* (opinion). An orthodox person is one who holds the correct opinions! Orthodoxy was a rebirth on Protestant soil of the medieval notion of faith. Faith is an act of the mind in which a person gives mental assent to revealed truths. What are revealed truths? They are the contents of the Bible. The Bible, for both Roman Catholics and orthodox Protestants, is a collection of propositions to which faith gives assent. According to this view, the Bible is not so much a witness to him in *whom* we believe (trust) as it is a collection of truths telling us *what* to believe (assent).

In effect, Protestant orthodoxy offered a choice between fact and fact, either the facts of the Bible or the facts of science. As such, the Bible was made vulnerable to all the advances of science. The Bible was treated as if it were an alternative statement of facts. Geology talked of an almost interminable period of the formation of the earth; Genesis talked of six days of creation. The orthodox forced a choice: geology or Genesis! Such an alternative was respectable so long as science remained somewhat unrefined; but when fact piled on fact, the results were tragic.

The Biblical witness was reduced to a dubious document of patently dubious "facts." The first reaction against this competition between faith-masquerading-as-fact and scientific fact appeared in Protestant "liberalism." Liberal scholars tended to accept the orthodox notion that the Bible offered a textbook in faith, morals, *and science*. They then proceeded to subtract from the Bible those sections which were scientifically unacceptable. This was a forced retreat, step by step, as science advanced. Finally, all that was left of the Bible was a collection of certain so-called eternal truths, ideas, and moral verities. If the choice arose between fact and faith, fact would triumph—for faith, in the liberal view (as it had been in the orthodox view), was but an inferior kind of fact.

This liberal response to science both liberated and betrayed the Bible. On the one hand, the Bible was liberated, in that it was seen to be a human document of man's growing religious consciousness through centuries of change and discovery. But, on the other hand, the Bible was betrayed, in that it was no longer seen as man's response to God's search for man. The Bible was no longer an authentic witness to the human response to God's acts. It lost its authority. The liberals were no longer bound to see through the primitive patterns of Biblical thought to what was really going on between God and man; therefore, the liberals picked and chose what suited them. Liberalism succeeded admirably in clearing up the details of the Bible, but it missed the point of the Bible.

That liberalism had missed the point, the "fundamentalists" were quick to point out. The liberals had willingly accommodated the Bible to modern thought, and, in so doing, they both clarified and confused the message of the Bible. The Bible is not fundamentally a collection of miracle stories and freaks-of-nature tales. Here the liberals were right. But neither is it a collection of the maxims of nineteenth-century, middle-class society. Here the liberals were wrong. The fundamentalists wanted to recover the Bible from this

marriage with culture. They sensed that the Bible is about sin, judgment, and salvation. They were right. But how does one give the Bible this authority to bring judgment? The fundamentalists came forward with a philosophy of "all or nothing." With even more vengeance than the orthodox, the fundamentalists said that the Bible was simply the Word of God, which meant for them that the Bible was to be taken literally from cover to cover. The end result of fundamentalism was the pathetic and ludicrous trial held in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, when a public-school teacher was convicted for teaching Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in the schools.

Response to God's Acts

The more one studies these disputes, the more one is convinced that the root of the difficulty was a misreading of the nature of faith. It would seem that orthodoxy, liberalism, and fundamentalism *all saw faith as assent* to certain ideas of revelation. And difficulty blossoms when faith poses as facts or assent to the facts. Of course, the Christian faith cannot live without facts. But which facts, and how many? Perhaps what modern science has been telling us, and telling us well, is that the Biblical revelation is not a picture of the history and shape of *nature*. Perhaps the focus of the Christian faith is not upon "words of God" in a book, but upon Jesus Christ, the Word of God who "became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (*John 1: 14*). Obviously, science has not always been right, but neither have Christians always been right. Much of the fracas between fact and faith has come from an improper notion of faith. Luther and Calvin gave us the clue when they opened the door to a better definition of faith.

For Roman Catholicism, Protestant orthodoxy, liberalism, and fundamentalism, faith is primarily an act of assent to religious propositions. For the Reformers, on the contrary, faith is primarily the commitment of the whole person in *trust* to God. Trust in God, not assent to propositions, is the clue. From such a notion of faith, Calvin could comment on *Matt. 27: 9*, where the writer makes a mistake: "How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess that I do not know, nor do I give myself much trouble to inquire." Although Calvin was not always consistent with this freedom, he here offers a hint of the proper freedom with which trusting faith can investigate facts without fear.

We are justified by God's grace through faith! This is the message and manifesto of the Reformation. One is not saved by one's performance. Salvation is not a reward offered to those who are morally, sacramentally, or religiously good or who hold all the "correct" opinions. One is not even saved by faith—if faith is considered intellectual good work, the belief of correct things. But faith is a response to the personal relationship given by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Faith is neither an inferior kind of knowledge nor a collection of truths to which we must assent. It is a personal response to God's acts. That the Bible is the primary and sufficient witness to these acts is its authentic basis of authority. Had this insight been held more carefully and its implications been more thoroughly appreciated, the Christian church might have been saved many sad moments of retreat. Perhaps all the retreats were from positions in the territory of science where the church had no right to be in the first place. Perhaps the battle between faith and fact arose in large measure because the church failed to see the nature and province of faith.

4: IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SCIENCE

Part of the controversy between science and the Christian faith has come from a false definition of faith. But the controversy also arises from a false or unclear definition of science. For example, the report of the Lambeth Conference (of Anglican clergy) of 1930 included the following words:

"There is much in the scientific and philosophical thinking of our time which provides a climate more favorable to faith in God than has existed for generations. New interpretations of the cosmic process are now before us which are congruous with Christian theism."

What do these words mean, if anything? Before we suddenly jump to the conclusion that they offer an intelligent and studied answer to the problems of science and the Christian faith, it might be well to see whether they mean anything at all. The words were written by Christian theologians related to the Church of England. What if they had been written by scientists? Would that make them any more meaningful, or would it make them carry any more weight? What if a group of scientists issued words to the effect that "new interpretations of the cosmic process are now before us which are *incongruous* with Christian theism"? What would that mean?

The truth is that much of the controversy between "faith and fact" comes from a *confusion about fact* as well as about faith. The previous article suggested that it is no longer the business of Christians to rest the case for their faith on a flat earth, a man-centered universe, man's utter distinction from the animals, and other such pseudoreligious issues. But what about *fact?* What is science? Here the problem is no less confused and should not be prejudiced simply because "science" is a word of indisputable prestige in our time. It is ambiguous, means more than one thing.

Net and Genie

Primarily, *science is a net*. Its practice is the use of appropriate methods to get the desired facts. The practicing scientist makes his observations, records them, and describes the results. He collects evidence for or against a particular hypothesis. His work is always tentative. He makes claims only for the evidence he has collected. He stands ready to revise his reports should new evidence turn up. Hence his statements are never absolute. For example, a few centuries ago an ornithologist would have been justified in saying that adult swans are white. What he really would have been saying was that the swans observed were white; but no one found it necessary to draw the neat distinction between the color of swans and the color of observed swans. Then the black swan of Australia and the black-necked swan of South America were discovered. Three alternatives appeared. He could say that some adult swans are white. Or he could define swans as white in such a way that black swans are not really swans. Or he could claim that swans are white and swans of other colors don't really exist, but are the product of rumors.

This example is not ridiculous, as is shown by advances in many fields of science. After all, scientists are human beings. They are subject to the same conservatisms as are others. According to the norms of science, they should not be; as human beings, they are. As late as the eighteenth century, scientists condemned reports of meteorites as the "pious religiosity of peasants who still regarded the sky as the abode of the gods." In our own century, the eminent scientist Max Planck wrote as follows of his battle for the Quantum theory:

"This experience gave me also an opportunity to learn a fact—a remarkable one, in my opinion: A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." [1]

The true scientist is interested in the observation, description, and prediction of facts. He gathers facts with his net. What is demanded is that he keep mending his net, keep using it, and keep realizing that it is a net. He will not forget that his net is restricted to the collectible facts. As a scientist, he dare not "interpret the cosmos," for no net is large enough to collect all the facts. The true scientist remains conscious of the strengths and limits of his task.

In addition to being a net, *science is also a genie*. Here the ambiguity of science commences. And here, at the point of applied science, is where most of us have contact with it. We all benefit from the applications of science in technology. Techniques are power. They turn the powers of nature to the service or disservice of man. In the practice of science, the scientist puts questions to nature and gets answers; in technology he uses these answers. Man is no longer the observing creature; he becomes the creator of his destiny. And something happens in the process (one does not even need to think of nuclear fission and hydrogen bombs): modern man loses contact with nature. He faces an *artificial* nature.

Scientific technology has transformed man by separating him from nature. The man who elects a senator who will get water dammed, pumped, and piped to his farm is a different man from one who relied on prayer, providence, and hard work. The farmer whose telephone jangles to tell him it is his day to irrigate is a different man from the one who hoped that the rains would come. The man who buys white bread, neatly packaged, is not likely to be reminded of fields of golden grain. Thanksgiving Day is a strange and empty celebration when one has never seen a harvest. Last summer we took our boy to visit a dairy to see another way in which (as his church school had put it) "God provides for us." The milking was done by machines that were connected by transparent pipes to the cooling tank. Complacently we asked our boy if he now knew where milk came from. His reply was simple, direct, and modern, "Sure, from pipes!" Technology had replaced theology. It may be that science's threat to the Christian faith comes, not from facts, but from technology. For vast numbers of people in our time, gadgets have replaced God. Yet who wants to give up the gadgets?

King and Savior

So we live in a scientific culture. Here *science is king*. Having proved itself as net and genie with the knowledge and control of nature, science now takes control over man. Science is proving itself in the realms of medicine and psychiatry. It is a different mentality that first calls the physician instead of the priest or pastor. Even to pray that the surgeon be given skill is different from praying for healing. With the advance in medical skill over the body has come skill over the mind. Control over men's minds is not a fantastic dream of some pernicious dictatorship. For many men and women the confessional has been replaced by the psychiatrist's couch and tranquilizers. The progress of science as net, genie, and king is aptly illustrated in mass communication. The scientist dis-

[1] From *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*. Translated by Frank Gaynor. Copyright, 1949, by Philosophical Library.

covers the rules that apply to the transmission of words and images. The technician builds a television set. The social scientists can predict the results of commercials.

In such a culture, where "science" has delivered the facts, the goods, and the motivations to buy them, it is no wonder that *science has become a savior*. It has attained the success of being deified. We put our faith and hope in science, and love it as our God! Yet is it really science that we worship? Or is it perhaps our interpretations of science? When we suggest that "we can do anything through science," the emphasis may be more on "we" than on "science." Our faith in science may be at bottom a faith in ourselves. To proclaim that "I can do all things through science which strengthens me" is neither Biblical nor scientific. Perhaps the battle is not between faith and facts, but between faith and faith—faith in God and faith in ourselves. By what curious logic do we collect facts about man's precarious and pygmy status in an infinite universe and use it as a refutation of God and a basis for reposing our ultimate confidence in man? The Christian faith has been roundly and justly chastised for making false assertions about fact; but technological success is hardly sufficient warrant for asserting a false faith. A theologian quotes the psalmist, "When I look at thy heavens, . . . what is man that thou art mindful of him . . . ?" (*Ps. 8: 3-4*) and is condemned as an antihumanist. But few seem to mind when someone looks at man in the universe, praises man's scientific genius, and gives his *interpretations* as "scientific" grounds for not believing in God. It is time for Christians to ask for the facts from science, and to ask for the facts about *faith in science*. Is the "scientific faith" a scientific reading of the facts?

5: SOME CLUES ON RELATIONSHIPS

The real issue between science and the Christian faith does not arise between scientists and Christians, as if these were two groups lined up on opposite sides of some fence. The real issue arises within each man. The battle rages between two habits of mind. It is the battle between objectivity and commitment.

This is a genuine issue for all except either scientific or religious fanatics. On the one hand, there are scientists who have become so enamored of the methods and results of a scientific culture that they have transformed science into a religion. For them, science assumed an almost messianic character. Apparently, those who practice a science of precise measurement, such as physics or astronomy, are less noted for this kind of "scientific religion" than some of the sociologists and educational theorists, whose data are more precarious and who often see our best human hope in science. Perhaps this is because man becomes less objective when he is his own object of study and so compensates for a deficit of observable facts with faith in his hopes and assumptions. On the other hand, there are literalists for whom the Bible has the answer to everything. They get their astronomy, dietetics, and geography from it. But, once fanatical scientism and Biblical literalism are set aside, the way is open for creative conversation between the two habits of mind —objectivity and commitment—that should appear in every Christian, whether he is a scientist, a businessman, or anything else. In this conversation there will be both tension and agreement.

Nothing Is Sacred but God

Protestant Christianity and genuine scientific endeavor share at least two areas of agreement. First, both were born in a spirit of *prophetic criticism*. Both possess a certain objectivity. Faith confronts tradition with reality; science confronts theory with fact. Neither has ever been completely successful in these confrontations, but the impetus is there. Old traditions and theories live long and die hard. Opposition to Galileo, for instance, came as much from scientists as from the medieval church. The prestige of antiquity can be as difficult an obstacle for the scientist who has a new insight as for the theologian who tries to recover the authentic Christian message. Yet it was just this spirit of criticism that appeared in both Renaissance and Reformation. Both Galileo and Luther claimed the right to criticize the established notions of society. To be sure, the practitioners of science have often surpassed the practitioners of religion in their more consistent application of objective criticism, perhaps to some extent because scientifically observable facts tend to be more external to man than is faith. Nevertheless, Protestants have dared at times to make critical revisions of their traditions when they have come upon a better understanding of the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, modern science and Protestantism have accepted the world as the world. The world is *properly secular*. So long as it possessed a "divine" character it was not open for investigation. It is true that Protestantism considers the whole world as sacred, so that any service in the world is a Christian vocation. But it also says that nothing is sacred but God. It breaks down the medieval distinction between sacred and profane vocations at the same time that it opens the world for study, investigation, and control.

The medieval church had so marked off the "religious" realm as superior that everything else was considered a servant of the church. Against this medieval attitude, modern science protests that the world is to be studied for its own sake. Simply to investigate and control the world is a proper and full vocation. Protestantism suggested that baking bread is as im-

portant a vocation as consecrating communion wafers. All of life took on new meaning and significance. The vocation of a scientist who is a Christian is fulfilled in being a good scientist.

Two Ways of Looking at Reality

The Protestant mandate for science comes in the Eighth Psalm:

> "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
> the moon and the stars which thou hast established;
> what is man that thou art mindful of him,
> and the son of man that thou dost care for him?
> Yet thou hast made him little less than God,
> and dost crown him with glory and honor.
> Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
> thou hast put all things under his feet."
> (*Vs. 3-6.*)

Here are three potent statements about man. He is but a fragment of the universe, a fact so well described by science. However, since physical size or location is not to be equated with value, there is faith that man has status in the sight of God. Therefore, man is free to investigate and rule over nature.

It is in this Biblical mandate for science that one feels the tension between objectivity and commitment. The tension finds focus in man. Man lives in two worlds, the world of nature and the world of history. He shares kinship with the animals and with God. This gives the clue why it is that science becomes ever more precarious the closer it gets to man. In astronomy, man is clearly the observer. Unless he has some unbiblical notion that the facts of his smallness in relation to the universe are indications of his lack of value in the sight of God, he is not concerned with the results. Commitment need not interfere with objectivity.

But what about a science such as psychology? Here man is both the observer and the observed. What is the precious key to man's motivations? Is it the need for sex? for power? for acceptance? Psychologists disagree. The very genius of a scientific notion is that it comes from an experiment that can be repeated. But how do you repeat an experiment with man? Take marriage, for example. Who can be objective about it? One who is as yet unmarried? One who is married? One who is divorced? Obviously, the closer the facts come to man, the less objective they become. Every man is a mixture of objectivity and commitment.

The proper tension between the scientific conscience and the believing heart is a tension between two ways of looking at reality. Science rests on persistent attachment to the values of generality, quantity, and objectivity. Generality is the process of arranging the facts to form a law. Quantity is the process of reducing everything to the measurable. Objectivity is the process of extracting the observer from the process of observation. With these three values, science shows itself as an activity that is constitutionally and of necessity indifferent to the individual, to values, and to personal involvement. Yet these things to which science must be indifferent are the very elements that make life exciting and meaningful. A human being has hopes and fears, loves and hates. So far as he is concerned, generality, quantity, and objectivity are trivial. On the other hand, a scientist must consider the singular, the qualitative, and the personal as blocks to success. It is no good to ask the scientist to poison his results by taking into account those very aspects of life which make science untrue. It is also a clear failure of basic understanding for a scientist to feel that he has captured the fullness of life, reality, and man in his net of statistical generalities.

What we need to discover is that the descriptions of life given by the scientific intelligence and by the believing heart are not finally competitive. There is an interplay between them, for these two views of life appear in the same men. They have equal validity, for they are two genuinely honest and authentic ways of looking at life. They are co-extensive, for there is no domain properly kept from science on the ground that it is sacred, nor is there any domain properly excluded from the man of faith on the ground that it is profane.

This was aptly stated by Calvin when he commented on the rainbow that appeared in the story of Noah. Any smatterer in philosophy, he said, knew perfectly well that the rainbow was a natural result of the refraction of the solar rays on a cloud. Rainbows had come before and they would come again. They are a natural phenomenon, subject to scientific study. At the same time, however, for the man of faith, the rainbow was a sign of God's promise of grace. Thus, science shows us our world, and we dare not shut our eyes to it. But first and last, Jesus Christ shows us whose world it is, and we dare to serve him in it.

UNIT II

The Elusive Goal

THE search for meaning is the thread that unites the life of man in all its varied history. The answers fill the books of that history, yet each generation takes up the quest anew. The young adults of the present generation are no exception. They wonder what life is really about, and they turn to many places and groups, including the church, seeking a message. The church claims to know what the question means; and today's younger adults are saying both yes and no to that claim. If taken seriously, this cautious willingness leaves the way open for the church to help modern young adults in their struggle for an understandable answer, a vision of reality that is intelligible to the modern mind while remaining Biblical to the core.

This unit does not expound the church's answer to the young adults' quest. Rather, it is an exploration *by younger adults themselves,* not of answers, but of the questions they are facing along the path to the elusive goal toward which they are groping. The first two articles of the unit have been prepared with the help of Rev. William P. McConnell, a Presbyterian minister now doing social work in Chicago. The other three articles record a conversation between two young adults and an informal moderator. The unit does not talk about "the Christian answer." It gives expression to the troubling question, "What is the question?"

1: OPENNESS TO THE RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

EVERY man lives in two worlds—an inner world of feelings, sensations, and thoughts, and an outer world of people and things. Like the matted tangle of two vines, the two worlds are fused in an inseparable way, yet each has a separate existence of its own. There is only one life that really matters to each of us, and that is his own. There is only one part of a battle that matters to a soldier when his death may come with the next exploding shell, and that is his own part.

Yet no man can ignore the outer world. Every person lives his inner life in varying tension and adjustment to the people and events surrounding him. In his inner world he seeks to understand his place in the outer. In his inner world he may or may not find a meaning for his life. But whether he finds it or not, he must seek that meaning. The finding of it is not guaranteed by life; the seeking of it is one of the terms of living as a human.

The outer world is given to a person at the moment of his birth. No one has ever had anything to say about what it should be like. At first it is probably a world of impressions and sensations pretty well surrounded by "Mother." But soon it expands to Father, perhaps to brothers and sisters, home, neighborhood, town, and then school. From there on it keeps expanding. Fifty years ago a young person could count on a fairly stable world, but today this cannot be said with any assurance. Like the rolling snowball, change is gathering momentum and taking everything with it. And if the younger person finds it necessary to play it cool, it is because there is not much that he can count on, so far as he can see.

Dead, but Missed

This is not to say that change is something new. Men have never been strangers to it. We no longer live in walled towns or under thatch roofs. The Indian American no longer lives in a tepee—except, perhaps, on the lawn in front of the Glacier Park Hotel. The once universal institution of slavery now exists only in such isolated pockets as the Arabian peninsula.

Americans once described the major thrust of change as "manifest destiny." Under this slogan they walked, rode, and fought across the continent, the shock troops of change. They felt themselves masters of the world they were creating—an American world.

But today we have almost forgotten their slogan. The land has been occupied and made to bloom—with fences, factories, and suburbs. Destiny must have decided to "get lost." We wonder where that heroic slogan was buried.

Wherever it is, nearby will be another last resting place—that of the hero, the rugged individualist. He is dead, and we are not quite able to resurrect him. He was the giant who lived in the world of our forefathers—a world that must have been a more personal one, for the future belonged to men and not to machines, processes, methods, and programs. The hero may live for a few moments again on our television screens, but his sudden death comes at the hand that

turns the knob and not at the hand that whips out the revolver.

The combined sum of westerns and private eyes on our home screens argues that we miss the hero, that the memory of our heroic youth lingers on. We might not have believed this, had it not been for the neighbor next door who became the "fastest gun" in our territory. However, we're pretty sure of who the winner will be in the duel between him and UNIVAC. Although UNIVAC may be a hero to machines, we humans identify ourselves with the man in chaps and boots, who stands solidly on his own two feet when the chips are down. The hero is dead, but missed.

There is another inhabitant of the world of our forefathers who we hear is dead. God, say Sartre, Camus, and others, is dead. It may be that the fate of God is not unrelated to the fate of the hero. In a world of machines, processes, techniques, and programs, there may be no room for either hero or God. We have searched space with telescopes and rockets; we have exploded and reduced matter to its ultimate particles, but we have not found God. Is he somewhere hiding from us? Why does he hide? Are some of us playing the role of the fool—"waiting for Godot"?

And yet there are many of the younger adult generation who seem to be waiting. If God is dead, he is misused.

Does the Church Have Something to Say?

As lonely individuals, many young adults are wondering whether they have a place in the order of things. They find themselves part of movements and forces that are beyond their control. Instead of solid rock on which to build their lives, they find constantly shifting sand, rapid change, no roots. And so they hear themselves asking the religious questions about the meaning of their lives and the significance of ultimate truth:

"Molly's a funny gal."

"Yeah. She's smart, at least she's worked hard. She's tried to be creative—paints, writes, is writing in her present job. How do you figure her?"

"I don't know. It seems to me she's trying to prove something."

"I wonder what I'm trying to prove? . . . What are you trying to prove?"

Long pause.

"I'm trying to prove that life is worth living."

"That's a sobering answer."

"Yeah."

Members of the generation that has come to adult years during or since World War II share, probably more than anything else, a puzzling sense of groping toward something they cannot, on the whole, define. Some can say with vehemence that something is wrong. Some can disclaim the goals and values of American culture by withdrawing into Beat colonies where no external values are recognized, no aspirations arise, and their only message is negative: "We cannot build our lives on the same foundations our fathers built on." The young adults of this era show their distrust of idealism and utopianism by seldom committing themselves to any cause—and then only warily. They reveal their lack of security by their preference for the "safe" job in the big corporation and by their grasping for that security in material terms. In the search for meaning, there is a marked turning from the outer world of achievement to the inner world of self-understanding. The growth of counseling, the currency of psychological terminology, and the prestige of the psychiatrist attest to such a movement.

This turning to the inner world is marked by self-questioning:

"The whatever it is . . . the something that I want to be doing that compels me to keep going . . . what is it? Is there something wrong with me that I'm not satisfied with the things that seem to satisfy other people? I think of the poor guy in the hospital whose main aim in life is to get through recurring periods of intense pain, so he can enjoy the luxury of painless intervals, and I wonder what right I have to complain."

Gertrude Stein is reported to have aroused from a coma on her deathbed to ask, "What is the answer?" And shortly she roused herself once more with, "What is the question?" It may well be that this generation, having found the answers of preceding generations inadequate, is groping to get beyond "What is the answer?" to "What is the question?" And in this groping, it finds itself compelled, not only to question modern society's traditional assumptions, but to reject much in the traditional American way of viewing life.

The church is part of this traditional way and, as such, is being questioned, with rejection an open possibility. In fact, many younger adults have found that an initial probing exposes much in the church that repels them. But the church also lays claim to having something to say about the meaning of life and ultimate truth, and much of the thinking and searching

of our generation lies in this direction. Among the younger adults within and at the edge of the church crowd, there is both rejection of the church as an institution with all the answers and openness to the religious questions: "Who am I? Why am I? Where am I going?" This attitude may threaten those with vested interests in the ecclesiastical institution. But it also reveals that the church, if it responds openly and not defensively to this questioning and searching, can call forth the courage and nerve of young adults to live as no more—but no less—than men in a world where change rules the day.

2: TENSIONS OF THE SEARCH

WHAT does it mean for a person to live as no more —but no less—than a man in a changing world? The persistence of this question in the minds of many young adults would seem to indicate that the old answers of the church and of our society are inadequate. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that those once-satisfactory answers have not been adequately or fully communicated in terms that are meaningful and understandable to today's younger adult generation. This failure of communication may in turn have come about because the preceding generations became confused about the full significance of the answers to which they were committed and, therefore, transmitted a garbled heritage.

However that may be, a renewed vision of the meaning of human life must hold in tension the reality of both the inner and the outer worlds. The author of the preceding unit has described this tension in terms of the relation between Christian faith, which is concerned with the individual, with value judgments and personal involvement, and scientific detachment, which is concerned with generality, quantity, and objectivity. Modern Americans have a habit of thinking about reality primarily in terms of the outer world beyond their inner selves. They feel at home in a "scientific" age. In fact, they have been so conditioned to this approach that, if a person attempts to view reality subjectively these days, he is looked upon by the bulk of society as at least peculiar, not quite trustworthy, suspiciously avant-garde, a visionary, an egghead, an impractical escapist, or a Beatnik; and he, in response, may tend to dismiss his critics as nothing but "a bunch of squares."

If we are to arrive at a vision of reality that has coherence and power for the modern mind, both the inner and the outer worlds must be recognized as legitimate elements of life. The subjective inner world is just as real and terrifying and mysterious as the outer world. The whole structure of civilization is built upon individual consciousness, a fact of the inner world. When you and I go to sleep, for instance, our dreams make a shambles of the outer world. Dreams are notoriously unobjective, but no less real for that. Sigmund Freud and others have helped open up the path to the rediscovery of the real inner world. The meaning of that reality must be part of the question of what human life is all about and part of the answer, if we are to have a coherent and powerful vision.

A Continuing Conversation

If human life has both inner and outer characteristics, then the recognition of this polarity will lead a person in some way into a self-examining dialogue between his intensely personal interior world and the completely public outer world. And as this dialogue begins, he will immediately realize that he is even then already in the middle of life, involved with friends and enemies, work and play, dreams and cold facts. He has made adjustments, whether satisfactory or not, to the demands of vocation, sex, and society. In his involvement with any of these at this particular moment, he may be backing off, frantically trying to gain equilibrium, or riding the crest of a wave. There are various pressures and demands bearing in on him in different threatening or encouraging ways from outside, and, at the same time, unsafe questions are emerging and threatening him from his own inner world. These, like those from outside, can at best be ignored only temporarily, because the raw stuff of existence must be drawn together if his life is to have meaning.

Of course, like every other person, he is experienced in trying to bypass the unsafe questions, to squelch, distort, soften, or cut off the self-examining dialogue. It is easy, but perhaps disastrous in the long run, for him to avoid looking more deeply within himself and others. As his days and weeks drift by and recede into the past, they begin to lose their vivid color in his memory and get washed out to a gray sameness. Most of what he does in the course of a day never gets him any closer to what his life is about. Consciously or unconsciously avoiding the dangerous dialogue, he may try to attach the total meaning of his life to some part of the outer world—his job, a present or future marriage, or a church. He may allow himself to float and drift with the crowd, losing himself in the mass, obeying its leaders, accepting the answers that are given to him as dogmas, content with material security, his goal a warm nest in which he can cackle and lay an occasional egg.

The person who takes this way has chosen to retreat from the dialogue between his inner and outer worlds. He has chosen to end the conversation with the conclusion that what the crowd thinks is more important than what he thinks. Whatever the many decide is right or wrong is right or wrong; what they think is worth having and working for is worth having and

working for. The greater the number of people who believe something, the more valid and true it must be. In short, there is no dialogue, but only capitulation to outside pressure; the inner world of the individual is virtually swallowed by the outer; and the vision of reality is stillborn.

But can a person thus abandon the hope that—in, of, and by himself—he has worth and meaning? Can he forego the idea that he has a personal identity that is not merely stamped machinelike on him by his society, but emerges out of his own human substance as he encounters his fellow men in the ongoing strife of existence? Does his worth depend on his achievements and status in the outer world beyond himself? Is the meaning of his life given to him by the outer world, by others? If he answers no too quickly to these questions, his denial may echo unconvincingly in the mute emptiness of his interior world. And if the echo is hollow enough, it may rouse him to ask himself at that moment, "What have I to do with what I am and with what I shall become?" The dialogue revives and may swing into the cadences of rebellion in his renewed attempt to view reality for a change in terms of his own subjective, inner world. But again, the dialogue may slip into another monologue. He may go as far as the Beat people, who seem to be saying individually, "By the beard of beards, I will have something to do with what I am and what I'll become, even if it's only to be unlike every current American model of man!"

But between the capitulation of conformity and the disengagement of rebellion lies the difficult way of the high-wire performer, who recognizes that the only significant responsibility inherent in his existence is to be himself in the dialogue between his intensely personal interior world and the completely public outer world. It is up to him to do his own thinking, to decide for himself what is right and wrong, to choose what is worth having and working for, in a continuing dialogue that neither drifts into abject capitulation to the outer world nor is lost in the compulsive rebellion of his inner world. And if he sees this as a responsibility for himself, he recognizes that the task of honest dialogue is inherent in every other person's existence. This task must not be given over to any thought controllers—organized or unorganized, academic or religious, political or economic.

The Church's Open Door

Where will the individual find the minimum security he needs in order to examine the unsafe questions of his inner and outer worlds, challenge his own assumptions, and cast a clear eye on the outer shell of form and custom? The church claims to be that source of security. But today there are great numbers of young adults whom the church is not reaching in the lone existence of their inner world. They feel that they as themselves are only partly accepted, if at all, by the church, and that they may find the church exerting the same kind of pressure as other institutions of society to conform to a settled pattern, to forego the dialogue in favor of the church's established answers about the meaning of life. The church can overcome this uncertainty and provide the needed security to the extent that it opens its doors freely to those who would penetrate the unsafe depths of their dialogue. The church will reach this generation by joining with them in a radical examination of its own life and message, not by defending its infallibility; by identifying itself with the confused seekers after purpose and meaning, not by posing as an authority that cannot be questioned.

This generation does not assume that the church has all the answers. At the same time, it does see, even if dimly through the garbled and confused heritage it has received, that at the center of the church stands the symbol of a life given for the sake of the highest truth—the meaning of man's existence and his place and goal in the order of things.

3: TALK IS NOT CHEAP

THERE is nothing easy about exposing one's doubts and uncertainties in front of other people. It is much easier to put on a veneer of sophistication and wisdom, and much safer. As one young adult said:

"It's the whole idea of my basic questions—you know: 'Is he Christ? What is my purpose, really? What is goodness? Am I meant to be something, or is it all meaningless?' These things I always covered over—would not really discuss. There was something frightening about them."

But adults, young and old, do talk about such things on occasion. In the interview or conversation presented below, and continued in the remaining articles of this unit, two young adults and an informal moderator explore some of their ideas about the meaning of life and their part in it. Ruth Cameron, who is in social work, and Ben Squires, in personnel work, are members of the Northminster Fellowship of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois. This church's program for young adults is outstanding in the Midwest. You will note that several references are made below to the Northminster Fellowship—that about three hundred people ("a mob") are involved in it, that they have occasional retreats, and that the small study groups they call "cells" seem to provide a climate in which members are able to speak about disturbing things with growing freedom. Few churches will ever have three hundred young adults involved in a pro-

gram; but even the smallest congregation has enough adults in their twenties and thirties to form small study and discussion groups.

For the rest of this unit, let us listen in on this conversation between Ruth and Ben. The person designated "M" is the informal moderator, the middleman, Dr. Ross Snyder, associate professor of religious education in the Federated Theological Faculty, University of Chicago. The conversation appeared originally in *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register,* November, 1959, the theme of which was "The Young Adult." Dr. Snyder was the guest editor of that issue, and we are grateful to him for permitting us to reprint the following interview.

M: What kind of sharp ideas on what life's about—what you're here for and who you are, what the world is like—have you been turning around in your minds?

RUTH: I'd say that the primary one I've been struggling with is commitment.

M: This was the topic of the retreat your group just had. It has hit you in a fresh way?

RUTH: Well, yes. A big part of it lies in the people I've met to whom this was something. One person in particular during these three years. It started me to thinking, "How do I get it?"

M: How did this person communicate this to you?

RUTH: That has to do with how the group here affects you, and that happens most in the small groups which we call "cells." And a real part of being in a group is to raise your questions which are heresy other places and which I have never felt comfortable in discussing with a minister. But contemporaries have the same questions, and it's different.

BEN: I think before I came to this group I had a feeling I was on some kind of quest—traveling along some kind of road. I didn't know what it was or where it was going, but I had the feeling of movement. When I got into this group—particularly in a cell group—the question of my quest became more identified as "Who am I? What am I? Where am I? Why am I?" The cell did not provide specific answers, but it provided the climate where questions could be raised without fear of rejection or lack of understanding.

M: This enabling of members to raise suppressed questions is an important definition of the purpose of the cell groups which members other than yourselves would make?

RUTH: I would say so.

BEN: They think and they hope that here is something they're looking for. They come down here on Sunday evening and see a mob—three hundred people—and the cell offers them a chance to get off in a small group, to find out, to relate to someone.

M: As you talked, I was wondering if there were at least two things—one is relationship, and the other is a kind of undefined feeling, "Well, maybe I can clear up a vague restlessness I have about things"?

RUTH: It was described to me as a place where you can spill your questions. At first I didn't. It took me a while. But ever since college I've developed a real interest in the intellectual. And this is what I thought the cell would be—a sort of Bible study, and ethics.

BEN: I heard other people who'd been in cells talk in a rather excited way about the program. And I thought, "Maybe it's a chance to express my materialism." I went for that reason, and also because a person in my building specifically asked me to. I didn't want to go back, but they made me discussion leader for the next meeting.

M: They pushed you around?

BEN: They got off to a pretty fast start in an area that I wasn't familiar with. Also, I felt a little afraid—I didn't know where this might lead. It might lead to opening me up—and I didn't think I wanted that.

M: It was more personal than objective?

BEN: Well, it ran along in a kind of objective way—but all of a sudden there would be a flash of a more personal nature. And these flashes really jolted me.

I was afraid to unbend and open up. (That doesn't happen after three or four years; you open up all too often.)

M: Do they always have a book, which they read as a basis for discussion?

BEN: They run on a pretty wide scope, although it seems to center on some kind of book. We've used records and short stories, read plays and, sometimes, gone to see a play. Principally, we've stuck with a book religious in nature. Our group took a book by Paul Tillich and fought our way through it. And we've taken some books of the Bible—I think with less understanding of them.

M: How long are you a member of a particular cell?

RUTH: For as long as you want to be. I've been in two now. The last one has gone for about three years, and five of us are original members.

BEN: We've discouraged "cell-hopping." We've tried to encourage some exploration before a person joins the group. The very best way seems for the cell to talk over prospective new members and then invite the ones they feel would fit in.

RUTH: Often somebody brings a friend to the group.

M: What about this business of being a discussion leader that you mentioned a bit ago?

BEN: We rotate every meeting—in both the dis-

cussion leader and the host. But they don't all run that way. But it does mean that we have a feeling of sharing and mutuality.

M: Let's come back to what happened to you. Ruth, you have said that you sensed the quality of life of a particular person, and this made an impact on you.

RUTH: Well, this individual was not connected with a cell. I think the cell helped me to "open." It's the whole idea of my basic questions—you know: "Is he Christ? What is my purpose really? What is goodness? Am I meant to be something, or is it all meaningless?" These things I always covered over—would not really discuss. There was something frightening about them.

M: You felt it was better not to raise these questions?

RUTH: Yes, but in the cell there was this stirring-up process.

M: This produces a lot of agony—when you really stir these questions?

RUTH: Oh, yes. But it also becomes a *common* quest. Before that I was more self-satisfied; I got along all right.

M: Was it that you were satisfied to accept the teachings of the church and let it go at that ("They sound pretty good, and I'll just go along")—or that you felt there were some questions you just didn't need to face in your life?

RUTH: I think more the former.

BEN: I was trying to think how I would answer the question you put to Ruth. I think mine was more of an outward quest. I was running along—looking, looking, but always outward. But the cell made me stop and look inward. It's a shattering experience. I'd never stopped to do that.

As I began to look inward, I began to hear myself—and to hear a stream of life going on about me I hadn't heard before. And I began to hear other people. That was another shock—I realized I'd been listening, but I hadn't been hearing. And, when I began to hear other people's questions, I realized that, although they were phrased differently, they were a great deal like mine.

M: It would be intensely interesting if you could tell how this came about. How you began to hear other people.

BEN: I think I only began to hear other people after I began to hear myself. And I don't think I began to hear myself until I got in the position where I could safely look at myself. And that didn't come until I had joined a group in which we were all groping.

M: And you discovered it was safe to come out with all kinds of bizarre questions.

BEN: Yes. And irrelevant ones. Or even off the topic. I began to realize that there were tremendous forces of association working within me. So I would jump out with it—and now I let it out.

M: No longer quite so compulsive!

BEN: Only as I began to see that they, too, had these questions was I able to express mine a little bit. Then, in effect, I said, "Well, now let me show you the next little bit."

RUTH: But I think if I had felt that all the members of our group had the same questions—or same degree of questions. . . . I think you need to find some people who are further along.

M: At least in this one area—have something to offer.

RUTH: Yes, who could say, "My answer at this point is this . . . ." They wouldn't be telling me *the* answer but *their* answer, for I think everybody has to find their own.

M: I suppose you do have in these groups people who want to tell everybody what to believe.

RUTH: That's what wrecked our last cell. They had views on the Bible that we weren't able to handle as a group.

BEN: We had some like that too. We had some who picked up the trite, pat phrases, and they flashed them on us as if they were prophets. But we kept on going, and after a while we realized that the people with the pat answers hadn't made a bit more progress than the plodders. And they stopped shouting them so much.

M: You mean *they* realized it too?

BEN: Yes, they realized that they were sort of shouting and that nobody was listening. I think it helped us a lot to realize that you just don't go ahead at lightning speed on some of these things. You may arrive at a sudden point, but you won't get to the next one for a long time.

M: Is it a correct conclusion that, for young adults, a great lot of their growth in ideas comes from being in a group of their own age? Perhaps with the stimulus of a book, they can stumble on together?

RUTH: I would say that is true as far as I'm concerned. But, on the other hand, I also get a lot out of the retreats where we do have an authority to speak.

BEN: I think a minister could come in the cell group, but not with the often-associated authoritarian figure that a minister has; he'd have to come as really a member of the group and be accepted that way.

M: You mentioned the retreats. You consider them quite important, I gather?

RUTH: They have been for me, particularly in the beginning. They're usually set up with a speaker from some theological school, and you have a chance to put questions back to him. But actually it was when I became a discussion leader, and we'd get together beforehand and go thoroughly into the subject—that's what really had the most meaning. But, even so, it gives you a chance to tackle one thing. We have three or four a year.

BEN: I've gone to all the retreats in three or four years. The initial impact was very good. I don't know—they've dulled down a bit. However, I keep going, hoping I'll find somebody really exciting. Stirring.

4: "A DESTINY TOWARD WHICH I GROPE"

M: I think now I'm after what might be called a world view or a picture of life all put together. Maybe it would be clearer if I diagramed it. This ellipse is your whole world. It has three parts. Here you are—and way over here are the goals you have for your own life. Somehow you have to get from here to the goals, so in between are institutions and people—some which will help you, some hinder. And, hopefully, there are paths you can find to your goals.

Now what are you like, what are your goals, and what is the world in-between like, that you have to handle? . . .

That's pretty tough to answer! Is there some conviction about yourself, your nature, and who you are that's come to be exciting and fresh to you?

RUTH: Well, the self changes as the goal changes. My goals when I came into the group were to become as good a social worker as I could, and, hopefully, to marry and raise as good a family as I could. Those goals haven't been thrown out the window. What has happened, I think, is a sense that God is more closely involved—it's not just me making my own plans about my own goals. I can't make it all by myself, the way I always thought I could. The need for God—I can't deny this. And the basic goal now is to try and understand what it is that God wants me . . . . I don't know!

M: If I catch you right, the goal is to keep trying to find out what you and God have to do with each other, but in some ways the goal is more vague. This makes life not quite so tied up in a bundle as it was.

RUTH: No, it isn't.

M: How does it feel to have it this way?

RUTH: I wouldn't have dared go this far unless I had seen someone who had this tremendous strength—in terms that God is just so much a part of her life. You know, it's seeing the possibility that gives you the courage to take the step.

M: You spoke back a bit about the problem of Christ. Would you care to state where you are on that one?

RUTH: I think I've come to feel that you can't separate Christ from God. You can't just throw Christ out the window and have a belief in God. At least I can't. It's seeing God in Christ which makes the impact on me. The cross—that's really phenomenal.

M: Does this awareness come to you in the course of your work sometimes?

RUTH: I think it does. I can see it in the actions of some people. My, their strength! In my work you can see man at his worst and at his best. You can see him in the attempt to fight without God. . . .

M: And these people with the strength tend to be religious people?

RUTH: Not always.

M: I suppose, in your work, there must be days and weekends when you go home utterly emptied—everything you've got to give has been given, and the problems have not been solved. So, replenishing your inner resources is particularly pressing.

RUTH: To me the basic problem is to accept that I'm not God. I can't cure everybody. I'm still fighting that. Of course, I do get down. But, as far as getting back, I think it's contact with people.

M: You wouldn't be sure quite what the role of religion is here?

RUTH: I think prayer helps. . . . I have no strong sense of *personal* relationship with God . . . particularly in prayer and in reading the Bible.

M: But you're kind of sure God is in the world—

RUTH: Oh, yes. It's sometimes the experience of God working through me. This I know. This I have experienced.

M: Well, what if we pick up—not necessarily in the same way—some of the struggles you've been going through on this matter of world view, yourself and goals in life?

BEN: Your question has to do with this total concept of life—

M: Yes.

BEN: Part of the change is this. When I *began* to think of knowing myself, it was in terms of my intelligence, my aptitudes. Later I realized that these weren't at all the things I wanted to know about myself. Those were all outward manifestations, and I wanted to know something much deeper about myself.

I think, here and there, I began to glimpse a part of myself that either I had not known was there—or was afraid to realize that it was there. There was much more to me than could be defined on aptitude tests. This was the real me I cared about. At this time the total concept of "What is man?" began creeping up on me. The Eighth Psalm—

M: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

BEN: Yes, it really hit home. I remember reading that and just looking up into space and thinking, "What *is* man?" It made me realize that the Scriptures sometimes can speak to man—in ways indefinable and hard to understand.

I think there's a force—sort of destiny. And so I need the Quest. I also have come to the realization that I may never reach an answer to these questions. And that maybe nobody else ever does. The quest for religious certainty goes on as long as the breath is going on.

I know this may look ridiculous now, but about a week ago I nearly lost my life in a boating accident.

And as I was hanging on—and I have some evidences on my fingers still—my thought was: "This can't happen. My life isn't yet done. I haven't done that for which I seem to sense I have a destiny." This even gave me strength to hang on, for I got mad. "You can't do this to me"; but the awful realization, "By golly, it could happen," was a pretty tight one too.

I think I've come to realize that we're all pretty complex people. All kinds of experiences shape our lives in ways we don't know about. And we all grope, with a great deal of uncertainty, toward our destiny. Even those who appear to have arrived and apparently have a tremendous depth of conviction about God—I find that their conviction doesn't help me. I have to arrive at this conviction on my own terms. Although I can be impressed by somebody else's depth. I can say: "Perhaps that is something which will happen to me in time. Perhaps it won't."

But I find that I have to grope for these things. And sometimes I don't think I grope—I fall into them. Or trip over them. In a sense, too, the whole question is becoming more vague. Things are not that definable. And yet, when I sense that they are not definable, I'm no longer afraid. I can accept this vagueness. I can accept the fact, as J.B. did in the play by Archibald MacLeish, that maybe I'm not going to get an answer.

M: You used the word "destiny," and I'm very much interested in that. Do I state it correctly for you that you say: "Yes, I'm increasingly convinced that there is a destiny toward which I grope; but, actually being able to define it quite precisely, I'm beginning to suspect is not given to man—or to me, at least. But I am sure of the worth-whileness of groping toward destiny."

BEN: Yes, I feel you've stated it correctly. I really feel a personal urgency—a need, a desire—I think "restlessness" is a good word in this case. I think this generalization might be applied to a lot of people here —a sort of restlessness.

M: Does this make sense to you, Ruth, in terms of your experience?

RUTH: Yes, very definitely. Somehow there's some kind of purpose. On the retreat, Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship* really hit me. This whole thing that you can't just put off (which I was doing)—the necessity of working without the clear bell-shaped answer. But you still have to keep going as best you know how.

M: Is the effect of this to make you people more or less hesitant about wading into life?

BEN: I am less hesitant to wade into life. The lessening of the hesitancy to think, to talk, to act, to get with it.

RUTH: I think the whole experience in the young adult fellowship has helped me. I think I'm better able to make a decision and to say, "O.K., for better or worse, it's done."

5: THE PIVOTAL QUESTION

M: Ben, is your awareness of your life pretty much in terms of "Here's my church, here's my job, here's my friends," and that's all? Or do you have a sense that there's some kind of meandering stream of history-making that moves down through centuries and sometimes almost disappears but, at the moment, has real possibilities of creating futures?

BEN: I have a definite sense of the stream. And I have the feeling that only my toes are wet and that what I really want to do is to jump in over my head and swim. I feel this on-goingness. I think I mentioned this at first—a something of movement to which I sometimes run along parallel. Sometimes I get into it, and sometimes I get out of it. And this is part of the Quest.

M: Could you describe what this stream of history is for you?

BEN: I think it's part of my thinking about "What is man?" . . . and also "What is he meant to be?" I've come to realize that I will not get out of the clouds a specific lightning bolt, saying, for instance, "You are going to be a plumber—the best plumber in town." But I am going to be called upon whatever I do to be true to myself. To be a human being—and know what it means to be a human being—regardless of what my ultimate vocation or avocation is—this is *really* my calling. And I'm given the freedom to decide in what specific area I'm going to work at it and get my pay check.

Now this is the main stream I've joined, the main stream throughout history of people who've been human and have come to sense their identification with a stream of humans. I particularly sense this when I begin to read the Old Testament, which I find exciting. (Maybe it's because "Benjamin" is an Old Testament name!) I find in the Old Testament a kind of exciting grappling, and yet wondering, agony, despair, and all the ramifications of human emotions—which help me accept my own ramifications and emotions and those of other people with whom I have to deal daily.

I see the main stream of life in them—or not in them. In personnel work we try to define personality—but we can't. But we know when we are confronted by it. And I think it's a person who's in this main stream of life—or maybe who have tasted the main stream of life without being drowned by it.

M: Yes, I thought a while back that you were saying that it's really experiencing yourself that's at the heart of the valued moments of your life.

BEN: Well, I would want to include them. Some-

times it's an almost ecstatic surprise to experience yourself as being human.

M: What would you say, Ruth, about this stream-of-history question?

RUTH: It's really—it's funny—I was thinking, all the time you were talking how actually my sense of purpose is much narrower. It doesn't go much beyond the people I know. I guess everything is very much connected with personal relationships. I really have no sense of a main stream of history other than people I've known all through my life. I can't relate to history—it just doesn't—

M: Would your profession be this for you?

RUTH: I get a sense of the present community and of the people I'm responsible for.

BEN: Maybe it's just the fact that you're a woman. I have a theory about that.

RUTH: I've been wondering about that.

BEN: If I understand women, her interest is centered around home and family and personal relationships. This is the center of her world and her main stream, whereas the man out conquering the world has a different sight.

RUTH: I have much less sense of past and future. I see no farther than the children I'm going to have. Really.

BEN: I feel that the area of interpersonal relationships is very important and is really an expression of this main stream I was talking about. And really to be able to cope with aggression and hostility and not be engulfed by it or have to reject the other person—this is something women excel in.

M: Let me throw another idea at you. Erik Erikson, in *Young Man Luther,*[1] suggests that a young adult has to find some ideas that both enable him to repudiate what the present generation of adults says, believes, and is trying to do, and also give him some inkling of some fresh new thing that he can help bring about. Where would you people be in reference to a position like that? Do you have a glimmer of something that really excites you—and partly puts you in opposition to adults? When your generation gets in charge of the world . . . ?

RUTH: There is the harsh fact of the hydrogen bomb. When it comes to repudiating our present leaders, I guess there is something in us of the "angry young men." But I don't know if I come up with any constructive way that the world could be better.

M: You do have some sense of "why should they be so stupid?"

RUTH: It's not really that much, for what's happening is the whole history of man.

M: Where would you place yourself?

BEN: I feel a certain rebellion and desire for improvement. At the same time, I often find as I try to make improvements that I don't succeed. And, when I analyze the reason, I begin to find out that maybe there's an age-old truth I've run up against. And maybe running up against it was good. But certainly I'd rather have bucked it and learned its validity. Because in a sense that's a re-proof of it. And I think these things have to be re-proved in every age. Without this continual questioning and battling, there's no way to make these truths your own. Only the intellectual assent somehow lacks the vitality that comes from direct conflict. So I'd rather wade into it.

Incidentally, it's interesting that I find I'm rebelling, but against somewhat different things than the younger of my own generation!

RUTH: I think it isn't the need to repudiate, but to find out for yourself. That's what's important.

M: All this has been helpful. Is there a final word you'd like to say for the young adult?

BEN: I think it's true that in this age—the hydrogen-bomb age, the tremendous mobility of our population (particularly the young adult, members are in our group here less than two years on the average)—there is a growing evidence of a *restlessness* and, at the same time, an increasing need to find something more permanent, more stable. And this expresses itself in a kind of quest. The young adult feels that "life is going on, but am I on a treadmill? And where do I get on the chair-car line?" And so in this age group I see great indications of a lack of roots, a lack of something to hold onto.

There must be something to which we can hang on, there must be something to which man has always hung when things got going or he really didn't know. Is this religion, is this God? What is it?

I've never been able to forget a question a girl asked in one of our groups, "Who is this man Jesus?" I think that is a pivotal question, and it's one we've asked over and over.

RUTH: I've wanted to say more about the program of our fellowship group, for I think it's quite important for people to understand its nature.

In a big city the young adult is looking for friends, so a very active social program is valid. He is also looking for meanings, basic purpose. And all these things are intensified for the young adult around thirty, for she looks around, and many of her friends are married, and she wonders: "Have I missed the boat? Or what's wrong with me that I'm not married?"

At any rate, young adults come *looking*. And offering a program in which people are free to take what they want is important. I started out in the outreach department. I did a lot of different things, but it was only very gradually that I got into the religious. . . .

But everybody is going to come to this group and take what he wants. I think the important thing is to have it all available and always be aware that the basic thing is the *Christian.* The fellowship is Christian, the service is Christian, the questioning and the intellectual are Christian. The Christian is the integral part.

[1] W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1958; $5.00.

UNIT III

Who Is Our God? *By George A. Allen, Jr.*

1: THE LIVING GOD

WHAT do you mean when you say, "I believe in God"? This would be a rather embarrassing question for most of us. If someone were to put this question to us without warning, we should probably find ourselves stammering for an answer. Then we might say, "Why, everyone knows what we mean by 'God.'" Actually, this question, possibly more than any other, would reveal the widespread confusion of our religious thinking, for it would produce widely differing answers.

There are some who would tell us about a God who does nothing at all. He created the world and set things in motion, but now he just watches things work themselves out. Others would tell us about a God who is the perfect picture of a benevolent grandfather who exists to give his children whatever they want and to overlook all their shortcomings with a "He's such a fine child!" Still others would think of God as one who exists to give sanction to the ideas, standards, and achievements that their efforts have produced. And then there are those who would tell us about a God who sits holding the scales of justice in one hand while, with the other, he dispenses rewards and punishments according to our standards of achievement.

But no one of these is the God of whom the Bible speaks and who speaks to us through the Bible. Who, then, is this God in whom we Christians believe?

The God Who Makes Himself Known

The God of whom the Bible speaks is not one whom we have sought and found or one whom our minds have conceived. He is the God who seeks us out where we are and makes himself known to us.

In this sense, the story of God's appearing to Moses in the burning bush in *Ex., ch. 3,* is typical of the Old Testament accounts of his dealings with men. Moses did not seek God. God came to Moses, who found it a rather unsettling experience, for God made some rather difficult demands of him. And in his coming to Moses God told Moses who he (God) was. It was not left for Moses to figure out who God was, to speculate about what God is like. God addressed Moses personally and told him what he was like. He was the God who freely chose to reveal himself to Moses. And at the same time he made it plain that he was not some strange, new God, but the God who had revealed himself to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was the God who had chosen the children of Abraham for his own people.

This self-revealing nature of God is seen even more clearly in the New Testament. In Jesus Christ God became man that we might know him. He came down from heaven and dwelt among us in a human existence to show us who he is and what he intends for us. This is not a different God who comes to us in Jesus. Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." (*John 10: 30.*) To the Jews who heard him speak these words, "the Father" was none other than "the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob." In Jesus this same God came to reveal himself fully to his people, to all who would believe. And because Jesus was God himself, it is to him that we must look for our knowledge of God and for our understanding of his revelation to the people of Israel in the Old Testament.

God seeks us; he himself tells us who he is and what he is like, and it is our part to take him at his word. Yet men persist even to this day in trying to make their own definitions of God. We ignore his revelation of himself and turn to other sources to discover him. We try to find out who he is by studying the wonders of nature that he has created. We think that we may find him through great works of art and literature that reflect the seeking of the human spirit at its highest. Or we try to find him in thinking upon the goodness that man shows to man, or in justice, or in the belief that we live in a moral world where right must eventually triumph. Consequently, we come up with all kinds of ideas of what God is *like*. But:

> "To whom then will you liken God,
> or what likeness compare with him?"
> (*Isa. 40: 18.*)

The attempt to find God apart from his own revelation of himself is not new at all. The Israelites tried it often and wound up with idols made by themselves. And this is always the result, an idol, whether it be an idea, a moral principle, nature, or man himself. When we try to search out God on our own, we end up with an idol that is but a projection of ourselves. For God is far beyond us, beyond our highest reach. We are men, and he is God, and we never meet him except as he comes to us in Jesus Christ.

> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
> neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord."
> (*Isa. 55: 8.*)

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God makes himself known to us because we cannot find him ourselves. And because God does make himself known to us, the question of whether or not God exists is never taken up in the Bible. The question always is whether or not we respond to him with belief and faith. The fact that he does reveal himself eliminates the need to prove his existence. God proves his own existence when he makes himself known. And if one does not respond to him with faith, then it is impossible to prove him to that person. In fact, it is impossible to prove him at all.

In the first place, he has willed that he shall be known only on his own terms, which are the terms of faith. And faith is simply believing his word to us in Christ. In the second place, no one has ever succeeded in producing a rational "proof" of God's existence that all reasonable men of intelligence and good will have been able to accept. Any man who will not believe God himself speaking to us will not be convinced by any arguments of ours. There have been a number of such arguments constructed by very wise men, and most of them have been rejected by equally wise men on reasonable grounds. Even if they were logically valid, they still would merely establish the possible existence of *a* god and not *the* God of whom the Bible speaks. No, our knowledge of God does not depend upon the cleverness of men. Great as that is, it would still leave us without God. But God has spoken in his Son. He has taken the initiative and made himself known to us.

God Our Father

What has God told us about himself? In Jesus Christ he has made himself known to us as our Father. This is not the revelation of an intellectual proposition. It is the revelation of a fact of God's relation to us. In Jesus Christ his Son he related himself to us as our Father. We were living in this world like lost and helpless pilgrims, strayed from his love, and willing slaves of the sin that is rebellion against him. God sent his Son into the world to show his love for us, offering us the freedom of his sons. For whoever accepts the offer of life in Christ by faith becomes God's adopted son. Thus, in Christ God offers us the opportunity to become his sons.

Because in Christ he is our Father, we know him to be merciful. (*Ps. 103: 8-13.*) He is not the God who deals with us according to our merits. He is not a heavenly bookkeeper who is governed solely by our good and evil. If that were the case, we should fare badly, for our highest attainments would still leave us in the red. The truth is:

> "He does not deal with us according to our sins,
> nor requite us according to our iniquities.
> For as the heavens are high above the earth,
> so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him."
>
> (*Vs. 10-11.*)

Instead of treating us according to our merits, he forgives us our sins. He cancels out the red column. He "covers" our sins with his righteousness and does not account us evil. (*Ps. 32: 1-2.*)

Because he is our Father and is merciful to us does not mean that he glosses over lightly our unrighteousness. The very fact that our forgiveness was so costly is a judgment upon us. And the knowledge that he is our Father also brings with it the knowledge that we are sinners and worthy of judgment. We see our Father as Judge. But we also see that his judgment is in order to his mercy. He judges us that we may come to our knees before him in repentance and faith in order that we may receive his mercy.

God is our Father who is in heaven. He "pities those who fear him." (*Ps. 103: 13.*) Fear in this case does not mean the fright that we experience in the face of some great danger that threatens our well-being. It is rather the awe that must come to us when we finally realize that we are mere men before the holy God, who has made us and redeemed us and whose goodness must seem to us like the brilliance of the brightest sunlight upon our naked eyes. That God is "in heaven" means that he is just this God who is so infinitely greater than we. And his pity is not extended to those who first have this "fear" of him. But his mercy produces this "fear" in those who receive it and not the cheap familiarity that tends to speak as though we were on equal terms with him.

The fact that God has revealed himself as our Father means that he will hear and answer us when we call upon him. But we may not take his care and help for granted. We must call upon him, make known to him our needs and our weaknesses that require his strength, and ask him for help. In so doing, we at the same time are acknowledging our obedience to his fatherly love and our complete dependence upon his mercy. And when we do call upon him, he will answer us.

> "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
> they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
> they shall run and not be weary,
> they shall walk and not faint."
>
> (*Isa. 40: 31.*)

Because God is our Father, we are not alone in this life, even if friends and family desert us and enemies surround us; for he is no farther away than our prayers, and he will sustain us.

God the Lord

God has made himself known to us not only as our Father, but also as the Lord of heaven and earth, as our Lord. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me." (*Ex. 20: 2-3.*) What does it mean for us that God is the Lord?

"You shall have no other gods before me." He demands our absolute loyalty and obedience. Whatever commands and receives our highest loyalty is our god. For some of us ambition is our god; for others, wealth. Some embrace a particular economic or political philosophy, invest it with final truth, and give it their loyalty to such an extent that they will persecute those who disagree with them. Some make the nation into a god. For others this world itself, with all the material goods it has to offer, comes first in their attention and service. But God will tolerate none of these. He alone is God. Him alone we must serve. Naturally we must serve country, ambition, political and economic ideals. But the service of these must be secondary to the service of God and must not conflict with our loyalty to him. Whenever any other interest in our lives conflicts with our loyalty to him, we must choose him and reject the other.

Why? Because he is God, the God "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," the God who "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (*Col. 1: 13-14.*) He has redeemed us, bought us with a price. We owe to him our allegiance and obedience. And true faith knows that of all the claims upon our loyalty, his is not only the truest, but is also the only one that really has our ultimate good at heart, because he alone is good.

Therefore, we must serve him as his obedient children. We must live our lives in submission to his purposes for us and for all mankind, allowing ourselves to become instruments of his holy will. We must accept him as he reveals himself to us, believing him and trusting him with our very lives instead of trying to have him on our own terms. Then we shall be praying with integrity when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name." For this simply means: "Let all men acknowledge thee as thou art revealed to them in Christ. And let us share in the coming of thy Kingdom."

2: CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

Very often we, or people we know, have difficulty with some part of the Christian faith and raise a great furor about the miracles or the doctrine of election. This is not surprising, for the Christian faith is not something easily understood that makes no demands upon our minds. The surprising thing is that so often we have so little trouble with Jesus Christ. We seem able to dispose of him very easily. Whether we accept the Biblical view of him or think him merely a great man and reduce Christianity to the Sermon on the Mount, we seem all too able to take him in our stride and incorporate him into our scheme of things without its making very much difference.

It was not so with Jesus' contemporaries. He produced strong reactions in the people who knew him and had dealings with him. His disciples left their homes, jobs, and families to follow him. Corrupt officials like Zacchaeus reformed and gave back money they had gained by fraud. The official clergy feared and hated Jesus and charged him with being a traitor to the state and with blasphemy against God. No one was able to take him in his stride. He always made a difference to men. This is the Jesus of whom the Bible and the creeds of the church speak. Who was he? What was he that he commanded such reactions?

Any reading of the Gospels immediately confronts us with a man. The New Testament never denies his humanity, but most strongly affirms it. He was born of a particular human mother. We know the place, approximate date, and circumstances of his birth from the Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea at the time of the great enrollment under the reign of Caesar Augustus, born into a very ordinary family in a lowly stable. When the disciples first met him, and during their time with him, they knew him to be a man, and the glimpses they had of the fact that he was more did not become clear to them until after the resurrection. At the trial and crucifixion most people thought the defendant was a man whose pretensions made him dangerous.

In addition, Jesus knew at firsthand the experiences of human existence. Temptation was a real thing to him. He knew sorrow and wept over the coming fate of Jerusalem, the city beloved by all Jews. He was a poor man. In the Garden of Gethsemane he knew loneliness and despair. He lived by his faith, trusting always in God. And he met a real death on the cross.

The facts of his life such as all men could see can be summarized in a very brief space. His parents took him, an infant, back to their home in Nazareth, where Joseph was a carpenter. There Jesus grew up in a normal Jewish family. He was presented at the Temple at the required time. At the age of thirty he began a ministry of teaching and healing. At first he attracted a wide following among the people, and he gathered a small group of intimate followers. But three years later the mission that had begun so promisingly had become, by the standards of men, a failure. More and more people had been offended by his teaching and his claims. Among these were the most powerful people in Jerusalem. Finally they had him tried before the Roman governor on the charge of treason, and he was crucified like a common criminal.

The Claim of Faith

There have been other men whose lives could outmatch his on the surface. But Jesus left behind him a fellowship, the church, that has never stopped grow-

ing. And the church's testimony, handed down from the original disciples who knew him at firsthand as a man, recorded in the Scriptures, and confessed in the creeds, maintains that the human facts of his life tell only half the story of who he really was. This testimony first began to take shape one day at Caesarea Philippi (*Matt. 16: 13-20*), when Jesus was talking with his disciples. Suddenly he asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" They gave him the answers of current opinion. Then he pinned them down, "But who do you say that I am?" And without hesitation came the reply of Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the claim of the church. The man Jesus Christ is God, and the words "man" and "God" are meant in their fullest senses. Now let us look at the way the New Testament and the church have expressed this testimony.

In *ch. 14* of his Gospel, John reports a conversation of Jesus with his disciples in which Jesus was trying to prepare them for his death. He was trying to tell them that after his death he would go to be with the Father, that man's ultimate destiny was to be there in fellowship with him, and that they knew the way to the Father. Thomas protested that they did not know where he was going and, therefore, could not know the way. Then Jesus made his claim to be the only revelation of God.

"No one comes to the Father, but by me." (*V. 6.*) No one can claim to know the Father who does not know Jesus Christ. But if one knows Jesus Christ, then one knows the Father. There is no other possibility of knowing God than through Jesus. Why is this so? "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (*V. 9.*) Jesus does not say that whoever has seen him knows then what the Father is *like*. No, to see Jesus is to see God, to know God himself. Jesus is not *like* God. Jesus *is* God. When we have dealings with the man Jesus Christ, we are dealing with God himself, not merely with a teacher or good man who knows more about God than we do or who has more faith than we do—although he is that too. Jesus is saying here that there is such a unity between himself and the Father that in him we meet the Father. He and the Father are one.

Jesus applies the same truth to his words and works. He did not teach as other men do. He taught people with the authority of God himself. The Jews of his day recognized this. That is what gave them offense. (*Ch. 5: 17-18.*) Here was a man, apparently a man just like themselves, and he was talking to them and acting in a manner that rightly belonged only to God himself. If Jesus were really the Son of God, really God, then it was most natural that he speak and act as he did. But they did not believe him and, consistent with their unbelief, they called him a blasphemer. But Jesus claimed that his works *were* the works of God. (*Ch. 14: 10.*) Thus, in his person and in his words and deeds, Jesus was *the* perfect revelation of God.

In the first chapter of his Gospel, John gives a fuller expression to this faith of the church. Jesus was the Word of God, the revealer of God, from all eternity. And he was God. He was not some other kind of creature or being, but he partook of God's nature from the very beginning. In *Phil. 2: 6* Paul is expressing the same thing in different language: "he was in the form of God" before he became man. Though the language of these passages may seem difficult, the meaning is plain. John and Paul are saying that Jesus Christ did not *become* God. He always was God. He was God before he ever became man.

In Jesus Christ we have the God who became a man. This is hard for us. If it were the other way around, as an early heresy tried to make it, man becoming God, it would probably be easier for us. We can understand and appreciate a "success story"; but this was just the reverse. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." (*John 1: 14.*) And that word "flesh" meant nothing else but "fully man." Thus the testimony of the New Testament is that in Jesus Christ we are face to face with One who is at the same time fully God and fully man.

This has never been something that men can believe easily, much less understand, though try to understand it we must. From the very beginning men have tried to explain it in ways that make it easier to accept. At various times in the history of the church

men have taught that Jesus was really God masquerading as a man, thus denying his full manhood. Some have said that he was neither God nor man, but something somewhere in between. Others have said that part of him was human and part of him was God. Still others have said that he was a man who, because of his goodness, became God, and others have taught that he was merely a man, although the greatest and best who ever lived. But the church insisted upon the fact that we must derive our explanations of Jesus' nature from the Bible. Therefore, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the church declared that this one person, Jesus Christ, was fully man and fully God, and that his humanity and his deity, though distinct, were inseparably united forever.

Inseparable from this claim about who he was is faith's claim about his death. Instead of his death's being the final defeat of his life, the testimony of the church says that it was the climax of his mission. The crucifixion occupies a central place in each of the

Gospels. It is introduced early in the narrative, and Jesus is pictured as consciously making his way to Jerusalem and the cross, in the full awareness that it waits for him. The New Testament faith is that the cross was not a defeat, but a victory. There Jesus met and vanquished all the power of sin and death by submitting to it. And the faith of the church is that he did this *for us*, that as a result of his suffering and death, we are accepted by God and forgiven, freed from the power of sin.

The Basis of the Claim

Why does faith make this claim about Jesus Christ? If the story ended on Good Friday, faith would be mere stoicism, a conviction that to endure evil without whimpering is to conquer it. But Good Friday was followed by Easter. Jesus was raised from the dead. Suffering and death, the marks of man's bondage to evil, were defeated, not merely by enduring them, but by asserting life after they had done their work. It was as witnesses to the fact of the resurrection that the Evangelists wrote the four Gospels. Between Good Friday and Easter the disciples were a defeated group of men. Easter and Pentecost confirmed their faith. They carried on the mission of Jesus because he *was* raised from the dead and because he *did* go to the Father as he had promised.

Because of the resurrection the cross was a victory. It was God's confirmation of the work of his Son. It was the verification of all the claims made by him and for him. On the cross Jesus glorified the Father by placing his trust entirely in him. In the resurrection God glorified Jesus, declaring him to be his Son. (*Rom. 1: 4.*) Thus he lives and reigns with God over all things as Lord, so that the hymn really should read, "Jesus *does* reign where'er the sun."

It is in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection that we can see the insistence of the church upon the New Testament claim that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. If he were only God or only man, his death and resurrection would have little significance for us. But because he was both God and man, it has life-and-death significance for us. As sharer of our humanity, the Son of God took upon himself our fate —death. And it was still as sharer of our humanity that the Son of God was raised from the dead. Because he was both God and man, we may share in his resurrection by faith in him.

Faith is the key. Who Jesus is cannot be *proved*. He is known only by believing his claim.

3: THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

You cannot read many Christian writings or listen to many Christian sermons without soon running across the name "Holy Spirit." No Christian can write or preach about the faith without mentioning the Holy Spirit. Jesus and Paul indicated that the Holy Spirit is of central importance for Christian faith. Jesus, at his ascension, told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the Spirit before trying to carry out the charge he had given them. (*Acts 1: 4-5.*) When Paul arrived at Ephesus, his first question to the Christians there was, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (*ch. 19: 2*).

The Spirit of Truth

In *John 16: 14* we discover the primary task of the Holy Spirit. He deals only with the revelation given in the man Jesus Christ. The task of the Holy Spirit is to bear witness to Jesus Christ. "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

The Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son, "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name" (*ch. 14: 26*), "whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth" (*ch. 15: 26*). This means that the revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the revelation of the same God from start to finish. That the Son is sent in the Father's name means that he reveals the Father. That the Spirit is sent in the Son's name means that he reveals the Son as the revelation of the Father. And in all of these it is the same God who himself is doing the revealing.

And what is the significance of this for us? Have you ever wondered about the miracle of faith itself? It is, after all, beyond rational explanation that men today possess *Christian* faith in Jesus Christ. One might attribute the fact that men believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in the time immediately following the first Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost to the passionate conviction of the disciples. But that would not explain the fact of faith today. Here and now we share in the same faith held by the original apostles. And every day there are new converts.

We believe in a Lord who was last seen on this earth almost two thousand years ago. And we believe, not in the memory of a noble martyr or a great teacher, but in a living Lord, who is present today to confer his salvation upon us. That this is true is the work of the Spirit whom Jesus sent into the world at Pentecost. Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, it is the result of the Spirit's testimony to Christ in some human heart. The Holy Spirit is God himself convincing us that what the Bible and the church declare about Jesus Christ is true. This is the testimony of the New Testament and two thousand years of Christian experience.

Men come to believe in Jesus Christ as a result of their receiving the Holy Spirit's testimony along with the Word of God. This is what Paul was trying to get

across in *I Cor. 2: 9-16*. His understanding of God's truth came to him by the Holy Spirit. His testimony to that truth was written in dependence upon the Spirit. And it will be understood only by those who also receive the Spirit.

What is true at the start of faith is true always. It is the Spirit of truth (*John 16: 13*) alone who guides the church in its perennial attempt to understand the truth about Jesus Christ and proclaim him to the world in every generation. In each succeeding age the church has to be able to give an account of its faith and has to understand what is the word God is speaking to men in that day. Thus every generation of Christians goes to the Bible to listen to the word of God and then turns to face the world to declare that word in the human language of that day. And the core of the church's proclamation has been the same in every age—salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This, too, is beyond our understanding on human terms. The history of the church shows numerous occasions when it narrowly escaped being changed into some other testimony than this one. That it did escape is because Jesus' promise of the Spirit's work has been kept. God himself has preserved his truth.

The Spirit of Power

How is it that the church, which today means you and me and all our brother Christians, is able to carry on this witness to Christ begun by the apostles? Those of us who have ever made any serious attempt to tell others about Christ will be able at once to appreciate the difficulty of the task. The apostles certainly knew. When Jesus was about to leave them for the last time, he commissioned them to witness to him before all men. This was a big order for men who had left him alone to face arrest and death. But he also promised them the power of the Spirit for their task.

Ten days after Jesus' ascension his promise was fulfilled. No matter what you make of the imagery of the sound of wind and tongues of fire, there remains the fact that something happened to make the apostles different men. Before, they had been timid about facing the Jerusalem crowds. They had been men of doubts and fears. We know little of what they did between the ascension and Pentecost. But Luke wrote an entire book about what they did after Pentecost! On that day they faced the crowd and proclaimed Jesus as the risen Lord and Savior to the very people who had watched him crucified. And large numbers believed them. Luke attributes this change in them to the Holy Spirit. (*Acts 2: 4.*) It was the Holy Spirit who enabled them to preach. It was the Holy Spirit who gave effect to their speech so that men believed the gospel. This is always the case. We must help in the church's task of witnessing to Christ. Only as we seek and receive the Spirit's power can we do it.

In every age the church has had to face hostility because of its task. The world attacks the truth of the gospel itself, seeking to discredit it by making it seem a most impossible bit of foolishness. Sometimes there is open persecution of the church, as there was in Nazi Germany and as there is behind the Iron Curtain today. Always there is the more subtle pressure of the world to press the church into the mold of the world, such as we find in our own country. If we read the history of the church, beginning with The Acts, we shall discover that no one of these is new. And Jesus foresaw this hostility. (*John, ch. 16.*)

The church survives this because the Holy Spirit sustains the church by "convincing" the world that it is wrong about Jesus Christ. (*Vs. 7-15.*) But this is not done in such a way that the world admits defeat or even openly admits error. It is done by creating and sustaining faith in Christians. Whenever the Holy Spirit confirms the truth of the gospel in a man's heart, the world is judged. For there the witness of the church to the righteousness of God is upheld against the false claims of the world of self-sufficiency. The very existence of this Spirit-created faith denounces the world. And the hostility of the world to faith shows that the world somehow realizes that it is being judged. Thus the Spirit's judgment of the world is not a negative thing. It is a wresting of individuals from the power of the world and a sustaining of the church in the midst of the world.

The Spirit of Life

The Holy Spirit verifies the truth of God's revelation of himself and creates faith. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers and sustains the church in the world. And according to Paul, in *Gal., ch. 5,* it is the Holy Spirit who makes the Christian life a reality in us. The Christian life is a life of freedom. Christ has set us free from the bonds of sin and the necessity to earn our own salvation. He has called us to live in the freedom of the fellowship of God. But this freedom is not something that is ours by right. It is like the manna that the Israelites received in the wilderness. It must be received daily from God. When we try to act as if it were now ours, independently of him, it turns into license, just as the manna spoiled when men tried to hoard it and so make themselves independent to meet the next day's need on their own.

The true existence of the Christian life is something we can have only as we "walk by the Spirit" daily. Paul does not mean anything mystical here. He means simply that we have to live day by day trusting Christ, whose agent the Spirit is, depending upon him for our goodness and everything else. Christian lives from start to finish are the work of the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit's testimony we should never have believed Christ. Without his power the church would never have borne the witness by which Christ came to our lives. And without his presence with us the life Christ described would be a futile hope. Therefore, we should pray daily, "Come, Holy Spirit," for to pray thus is to pray for a living faith both in ourselves and in the church.

RESOURCES FOR STUDY IN A

Parents' Discussion Group

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Depression
2. Has Father Abdicated?
3. Has Mother Abdicated?
4. A Good Nursery School
5. When They Ask Questions About the Bible
6. How to Size Up an Expert

Depression

By Paul W. Pruyser

SHORTLY before the editor asked me to write about depression he had requested that I write about anger. Although this may seem a decisive shift in gear, I must confess that I see the hand of Providence in it, for it affords me the opportunity to say at the outset, clearly and deliberately, that depression is a form of anger and that it is almost impossible to talk about the one without saying something about the other.

Anger and depression are very common human experiences. We all have observed them, in ourselves and in others. The Bible often refers to them. But the immediate form or appearance of each is very different, almost as different as opposites! Anger makes us red in the face, it heightens the tension of our muscles, our eyes become bloodshot, our heartbeat is faster, and we are hyperalert to a word, a glance, a gesture of those around us—all of which seem to have the effect of making us more angry. We are ready to strike, in deed or in word, directly or by the use of symbols. We focus all our attention on the enemy or on some suitable substitute, such as the dog or cat, which may receive our blows instead. We may cuss and swear and behave in ways we should ordinarily denounce. In a word, anger is one of those intense emotions which tend to disinhibit us—it makes us lose our usual control.

If we now look at depression, we find a striking contrast in many ways. In depression our thoughts and our movements slow down, our spirits get low, our voice becomes soft, our body becomes a burdensome weight. We feel low, blue, down and out. The environment has no attraction for us—neither friend nor foe can command our attention, or only with great difficulty. We lose all initiative; vitality and the spark of life seem gone or, oh, so faint. Depression is a severe inhibition.

Don't Ask Me Why!

There is another contrast between anger and depression, this one not outward, but inward. The angry man usually knows what he is angry about and at whom he feels angry; his anger leads to a display of activity at someone over something. Typically, in the Old Testament God's anger and wrath are directed at his people, excited by their wrongdoings, and his fury comes down upon them, their sons, crops, cattle, or political freedom. A similar display of anger occurred in God's prophets: They thundered at the people and castigated them in words, predicting misery and demanding repentance. In the New Testament Jesus is shown flaring up and displaying drastic action against the money-changers in the Temple. Thus, the angry person is usually conscious of being angry *at* somebody, *about* something.

None of this seems to occur in depression. It is indeed quite typical of the depressed person that he does not know what he is depressed about. He is just depressed, and this very absence of a conscious reason, target, or object makes his condition all the worse. He just feels melancholy and blue and only wants to be left alone. There is nothing to say to him. There are no thoughts to be exchanged. There is no point in trying to cheer him up. In depression, the whole world and all the people, including ourselves, look different. The "other world" that the cheerful ones try to convince us about is simply not there.

A third contrast between anger and depression lies in the cultural attitudes toward them. In many circles, particularly among church members, anger is frowned upon, argued against, denied, or ignored. Children are

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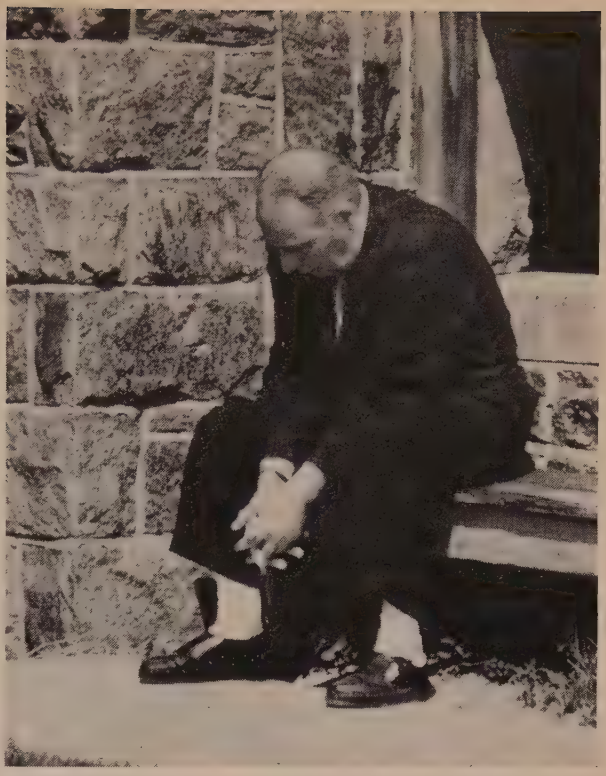
"Depression is a symbolic way of 'paying the price.' "



taught not to show anger, even not to *be* angry. Angry feelings are taboo. The word "hell" is an unspeakable word, even in a Presbyterian church school, as I observed lately. Not even the faintest likeness to God's "holy wrath" should be seen in our civilized classrooms and sewing circles! But, meanwhile, our society permits depression to be rampant, so to speak. Watch factory workers go off shift, or take a ride in a commuters' train and study the faces of the people: six out of ten persons look down and out, listless and blue, and are of low spirits. Or peek into one of the decorously quiet, slow-moving, and low-spirited church committee meetings in which not a hand stirs and not a voice is raised. One would think that piety and depression were synonymous.

The Self the Target

With all these striking differences, then, how could anyone maintain that anger and depression are closely related? Where is the anger in depression, what is it about, and who is the target or object? In a now classical study, "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud pointed out that anger need not always be directed at persons outside of us, but can be turned upon ourselves. This is all the more likely when the exciting reasons for our anger are unconscious and when we have felt—again mostly unconsciously—disappointment at the hand of persons we love. In the latter case, our very love for such persons may prevent us from having even the faintest conscious thought of hating them. For such a thought may go against the moral and idealistic precept of "love your neighbor," which we have learned from the parents and the teachers dearest to us. If we cannot allow an outside target for our anger, it may become directed upon ourselves and so assume the form of depression. The clearest example of this reversal of target is seen in suicide—the angry blow lands upon the self and brings an end to its existence.

Note that the obligation to be loving, good, moral, and upstanding plays a very large role in this construction by Freud. It refers to the conscience, but it says that the conscience of some people is excessively harsh and demanding. Depression, then, is in large part a product of an overly strong and forbidding conscience. Roman Catholic priests with experience in hearing confessions have for many centuries noted that some people suffer from "scrupulosity," that is, from an exceptionally rigid and unforgiving conscience, which acts with a vengeance that does not even permit God's grace to enter the human heart. The father confessors had a hard time dealing with such parish members and rightly considered them somewhat arrogant in their denial of God's effective grace. After all, when God deems a man worthy of his love, who is he to think lowly of himself?

An excessively harsh conscience demands from its possessor a readiness for self-punishment; it demands that the person abase himself and deem himself unworthy, unlovable, not entitled to food, regular sleep, entertainment, and all the other good things in life. Thus, the typical early symptoms of depression are sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, and abstinence from parties, worship, and Communion services. Joy, pleasure, self-regard, and a sense of self-worth are felt as sin by such a person. And since sin, according to the legalistic code, should be followed by retribution, the person develops self-chosen inconveniences, setbacks, pain, sufferings, anguish, and other unpleasant things that serve him unconsciously as forms of atonement for his imaginary misdeeds. Depression is a symbolic way of "paying the price."

Depressions may range all the way from mild somberness to intense gloominess, self-dejection, and suicide. Although only the severe forms are truly disabling, even the mild forms cut down on the maximum

use of a man's talents and capacities. There is always a destructive element at work that leads to tragic waste. Karl Menninger has described the many gradations of depression under the appropriate title *Man Against Himself,* and has shown with great insight the many forms it may take, particularly the disguised ones, such as proneness to accidents, excessive demands for surgery on one's body, the mutilation of oneself through excessive scratching, or slow self-destruction by heavy drinking and the overuse of drugs.

The Bible also contains a classical story of depression. After Nathan has reprimanded David for his transgressions with Uriah and his wife, "David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground; but he would not, nor did he eat food with them" (*II Sam. 12: 16-17*). In this case, the depression followed a reprimand. Sometimes depression follows the death of a loved one. *But depression need not follow any particular outward event at all.* The mild, chronic depressions, which are so often seen in daily life and which may, indeed, characterize whole families, are more likely to be products of everlasting dissatisfaction with oneself. Here a slow, constant anger, which never finds an outward target, "eats up" the person so that he never achieves a sense of well-being. It is all kept inside and steadily does its pernicious work.

"I, the Jury"

And this brings us perhaps closest to the heart of the matter. When a person speaks of "dissatisfaction with himself," the reference is obviously to some discrepancy felt within himself. It assumes the existence of some inner standard by which the person measures his own actual achievement and his worth. He compares his ideal image with his real one, his potentialities and possibilities with his actuality. Note that this is the person's *own* comparison, using his *own* standard —not some current social norm or somebody else's judgment. The want is felt *by* the self *within* the self.

How and where do we obtain such "inner standards"? Basically, and for the most part, they are learned. They are learned from the moment we are born, by a process that is very much like a mental eating and drinking. That is, they are acquired by "incorporation" of the teachings, attitudes, praise and blame, encouragement and discouragement, received from the persons dearest to us, on whom we depend for life and growth. Our best psychological knowledge suggests that, under ordinary circumstances, the most vigorous incorporation of such teachings takes place in the first few years of life and that it tends to have the most lasting effects, although later learning certainly may impose changes. And the teachings need not be verbal lectures at all. Long before a child can speak and understand language, he has already been taught, by smiles and frowns, by being taken up and "put away," by emotional warmth and coldness, that some of his attitudes and behavior are approved or disapproved. When language enters the picture, this is further enhanced by the "do's" and "don'ts" that enter his ears. These sounds leave a long-lasting echo, which in the long run constitutes the "inner voice" of conscience. What is commonly called "morality" has a very personal basis.

Why should it be the case, then, that common moral standards are shared by so many people in a culture and that the standards seem to change so slowly in the course of history? For instance, why do so many Christians still abide by the barbarian principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"? The answer to these questions starts with the recognition that not only most early learning, but also most of the teaching at that time, is an unconscious process. The very young child does not ask rationally whether he wants to be like his father rather than like the milkman; he does not weigh the pros and cons of each one's style of life and aspirations. But neither does Father ask rationally what moral standards are best for his child. He gives praise and blame automatically, driven by his own inner standards. And praise and blame from persons whom we want to be like become deeply engraved in our minds. What is first the copying of an outer model rapidly becomes an inner model, long before the age of reason begins. In actual practice, a parent gives his child a set of standards of which he, the parent, rarely knows the basis and origin. They are part of his own unconscious, handed down to the next generation as part of a network of strong emotional ties.

No Merit System

In the letter to the Romans, Paul saw very sharply how difficult it is for most people to move from a covenant of law to a covenant of love. Not that the people did not like love; they had simply come to appreciate love in terms of the law, with its "do's" and "don'ts." In this framework, love was to be merited, by a painstaking obedience to the law.

Jesus put things the other way around: Love is given freely and accepted joyously, to the effect that the law will be espoused naturally by people with a positive self-esteem who are aware of their destiny. The Jews who protested against this part of Jesus' preaching did not do so out of immorality. On the contrary, they were *too* moral! But they had become stuck in the same set of unconscious assumptions that the unfortunate young child makes when he incorporates, unknowingly, but with zeal, the standards of his upright and moral, but oh-so-harsh-and-rigid, examples. There are still many such moralists in our Protestant churches, and they are not the most joyful and constructive members. Conscience, once lauded as the spark of God in man, is often an all-too-human affair. In a paradoxical mood of cynicism and loftiness, Freud once said that man is not only more immoral, but also more moral than he thinks.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 1

Before the Discussion

In this article we have an analysis by a clinical psychologist of the experience of depression. The value of such an analysis for parents is that it provides us with a sort of *anatomy* of depression: knowing its characteristics and having a clue to their roots, we can more adequately deal with the problem in ourselves and in others. Finally, we are given a strong hint as to the relevance of the Christian faith in dealing with the roots of our depression.

The following is a summary of the discussion in the article itself:

Anger and depression are common human experiences. They are different in appearance, however. Anger strikes out, has a target. Depression, on the other hand, is an inhibition, a loss of initiative. Furthermore, the depressed person does not know what he is depressed about; he can give no reason for the way he feels.

There is another contrast between anger and depression. Society condemns anger and suppresses its manifestations. On the other hand, depression is everywhere and seems to be an accepted state of being—witness low-spirited church committee meetings and the sour faces of men on their way to work.

Actually, depression is a form of anger. The reasons for the anger are unconscious—hidden from awareness. Depression is anger turned on one's self. We may not direct our stored-up anger at an outside target (we are taught to "love your neighbor"), so it is turned inward. The sterner our conscience, the greater the need to atone for our feelings of hatred; thus our depression is a form of self-punishment.

Conscience is a valuable quality. Conscience, however, is largely taken over from parental attitudes. Further, our standards and attitudes were formed when we were very small, even before we were aware of what was happening. Our inner *ideal* of conscience may be at odds with our own capabilities. Our depressed, dissatisfied feeling may be the result of compromising our inner ideal. The "do's" and "don'ts" of our parents are incorporated into our thinking and feeling—conscience is the "long-lasting" echo of our parents' attitudes and values.

Depression or self-punishment is related to the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," for we insist on suffering for what we feel is a violation of our standards. We live by the law, the stern law of an unattainable morality. We act as though we could not be loved, or love ourselves, unless we merited such love.

But in the Christian framework, love is not merited—it "is given freely and accepted joyously." We live not by the law (even the law of our own making), but by God's grace. We are beloved of God, and therefore free to love our neighbor. We need not bear the burden of our guilt, for God has taken it on himself.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it true that depression never seems to have an object? Can one be depressed *about* something? Distinguish between "depression," "discouragement," and "bereavement."

2. Why does society suppress expressions of hostility and anger? Why are angry feelings *taboo* in church circles? (There are socially approved outlets for aggressive feelings: Is this why many women enjoy Saturday-night wrestling on television?)

3. Freud assumed that every individual has aggressive feelings as well as loving feelings, and that it is useless to try to dam up the aggressive feelings. Normal hostility, if repressed, will only express itself neurotically. How valid do you think such a view is? Does this undercut our pretensions to moral perfection? What does such a view have in common with the Biblical understanding of man?

4. Do you agree with the author's description of the way in which conscience is formed? Should we suspect our scruples? What of the opposite danger of irresponsible freedom?

5. If depression is the "symbolic way of 'paying the price'" for our imaginary misdeeds, what is the way out of this vicious circle?

6. What standards are we transferring to our children? Will they be able to live with these standards when they face reality as adults? Do they know more of *law* than of *love?*

7. To what extent are you saddled with legalistic and moralistic requirements? If God forgives, can we not also forgive ourselves?

8. Are there some conditions in our world about which we should be conscience-stricken?

For Further Reading

Man Against Himself, by Karl Menninger (Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.; paper, $1.45).

The Courage to Be, by Paul Tillich (Yale University Press; paper, 95 cents).

Has Father Abdicated?

By Stephen B. Rybolt

When radio, television, motion pictures, and popular magazines cut loose on Father, all of us get a chuckle. Father is shown failing miserably as a cook, baby sitter, handyman around leaky faucets, and as a counselor on homework. In motion pictures, he is often depicted as weak, helpless, ineffectual. When crisis strikes, in flocks a bevy of wise, competent, warmhearted females—wives, mothers, secretaries, maiden aunts, even toothless babies—to prop him up until the skies turn blue again. Often he is just a goodhearted pal, the perfect object for family jokes.

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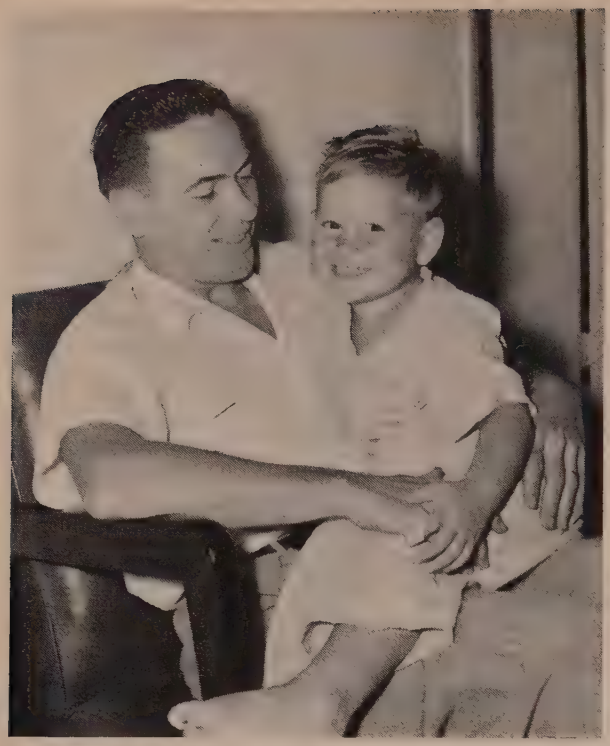


"The father does have . . . some important functions to perform."

Such humorous and often hostile characterizations may not be without some aspect of truth. But they would not have been true of the father of fifty years ago. At the beginning of this century ours was a predominantly rural society. Many fathers were close to the home where their youngest children could easily watch them work. The children old enough to handle a pitchfork, drive a team hitched to a plow, or do any such farm task, learned who Father was, and what it meant to be a father.

When the data are available from our last census, we may confirm our suspicions that fewer than three of every ten Americans are rural dwellers and that only half of these actually live on farms. That we are a highly mechanized, technological, urban culture is not arguable.

The sociologists who study the many facets of our societal life characterize it as one of transition and change. Mobility is often agonizingly real to us. Men change jobs frequently, and this, more often than not, uproots home and household. There is a growing number of families who never sink the deep taproots characteristic of a rural society, because the uprooting process of change is so painful. The accompanying changes are also quite real to us. As the urban city grows, the expansion of the business district forces residents to move out. But out where? Out to what were once pasture land, corn fields, and city dumps, but are now covered over, landscaped, and made attractive to a mobile family. It begins to be work just to get into the city! The morning rush for the commuters' train, the inevitable car pool, the steady, relentless stream of cars lined up along the trafficways, lead men back into the city for work. Much time spent away from home and the family.

Father in Eclipse

In such an urban culture with its characteristic mo bility and change, what is the role played by Father the family? The father's role has changed because th family has changed. The family has changed, and co tinues to do so, because the world around the famil is changing. It is changing faster than most of us lik to admit and, in many cases, faster than we can a similate without accompanying distress. The forme basis for the family was its legal sanction and its ec nomic importance. Change has moved the productio of primary goods and products out of the family. As consequence, Father often leaves home early in th morning, not to return until the children are near ready to end the day.

Dr. Gibson Winter writes on this theme of a ne emerging family in his book *Love and Conflict*. Of th problems the family faces today, none is more in portant than a recovery of the father's place in th family and home.

"The old pattern of father's authority has disap peared. The power which mothers always exercise was thus left naked and alone. Mothers used to hol the home together with an authoritative male in th background. And this male figure could afford to sta in the background, because his position was real an unquestioned. Now, mothers try to hold the family to gether on their own. There is no male authority t undergird their discipline." [1]

As a teacher of theological students in the field o Christian ethics and sociology, and an experience student of American culture and society, Dr. Winte seems to add his weight to a growing number of writer who pronounce the death knell upon the traditiona pattern of the father. One statement can be highlighte as expressing his studied judgment: "It is certain tha industrial life ended male domination in the family."

In my concern, sharpened by many similar diagnose and especially by Winter's *Love and Conflict,* I sough out an acquaintance, Dr. Ernest Manheim, chairma of the department of sociology of the University o Kansas City. "Just what are the functions of the fam ily today?" was my pressing question. "The con temporary family fulfills the function of providing opportunity for (1) life companionship for the hus

[1] From *Love and Conflict: New Patterns in Family Life,* b Gibson Winter. Copyright © 1958 by Gibson Winter. Used b permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

band and wife, (2) the rearing of children, and (3) the continued sexual expression for the marriage partners."

The father does have some roles to play, and as we would certainly hope to think, some important functions to perform. Father used to be called the *breadwinner,* and he still is, in most cases. For better or for worse, men are the chief workers and the source of the family income. To be sure, this role is difficult for the youngest children to understand. Wives know he is the one upon whom the family depends for money to provide food, shelter, clothing—in a word, the family livelihood. It becomes clear that there needs to be developed in the family a way to teach the meaning and importance of Father's work. The mother needs to interpret the father's part in providing for the family. It should further be stated that the payroll check, one of the intricacies of an urban economy, can be interpreted by the decision-making processes of every family as it plans expenditures and purchases. Thus, the father is fulfilling an often difficult role in the family as the provider of its basic support.

As the one who apparently travels into more than one neighborhood and has today an expanded relationship with many people, the father is a *teacher* of his children as he shares his experiences and his contacts. It is important that children be given the basis for their many immediate and future social relationships. As he teaches by story, experience, and demonstration, the father becomes one of the prime factors in the socialization of his family.

An Old Role Refurbished

Even with the increased demands upon his time for traveling to and from his work, and for the extra "homework" many fathers bring with them on their return, Father must fulfill his role of transmitting to the children the *meaning of manliness and fatherhood.* The father, or someone who can be a father surrogate, must transmit this meaning. Here is something far more caught than taught. In a day when we apparently do not care enough to have male teachers in the elementary classroom, the father must assure himself opportunity to convey to his youngsters what it means to be a man, a husband and father.

Closely related to this role the father plays as the man in the home is his function as the *authority figure.* Before you begin to think of the Victorian father, aloof for the most part, stern, and often unreasonable, remember that authority does not necessarily result in authoritarianism. I am more concerned that the father hesitate before he hands over all rights of disciplining the children to his wife. The problem so many families face today is not patriarchalism or extreme parental restriction, but simply a lack of authority. Because Father is so often not around when discipline is needed, Mother finds herself with another role to fulfill, but without clarity in its function and with mixed feelings about it anyway.

Winter's thesis presents the problem, but certainly it is overdone. The father has not abdicated his role, although he may have a personal problem trying to determine the best approach. He has probably heard at the P.T.A. that discipline may cast out one demon only to find seven taking its place. This is not necessarily sound thinking, even as a general statement or rule of thumb. One recent study that I can cite was made by Dr. Andrew F. Henry, of Vanderbilt University. Studying delinquency and the disciplinary roles of parents, Dr. Henry concluded that "there is less delinquency among children and youth where the father is the principal disciplinarian and the mother lax in discipline." Discipline by the father appears to be directly related to inner strengths and independent judgments for the young. When authority does not exist or there are no norms, the child is confused and often resentful. He needs the standards by which to make his choices. A child's father is the person who needs to maintain and exercise his function, overcoming the apparent difficulties of timing and the possible threat to an otherwise "peaceful" evening.

It is not easy (no one says it is) to rear families amidst such unexpected change all about us. It is even more difficult always to be specific with prescribed Christian answers. There are few Biblical passages that "spell it out" without real study and discussion. Two passages of the New Testament should provide some basis for husband and wife to consider their family life, and particularly the husband-father role—*Gal. 3: 27-28* and *Eph. 5: 21-23.* I shall conclude by reminding you that the Bible is important for its message of repentance and grace. The life of faith is lived in the family, as in other areas of life; part of its meaning is freedom from absolutes.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 2

Before the Discussion

The role of the father in modern family life is the problem with which this article deals. The writer refers to the research of Gibson Winter in his book *Love and Conflict* and finds some disturbing trends. Motion pictures, television, and recent fiction have focused on the foibles and the inadequacies of Father in his role. His ability to make decisions and to administer discipline are severely criticized and at times ridiculed. Father is often pictured as well-meaning but incompetent. He is manipulated by his children, dominated by his wife and in-laws, cowed by his boss at work, and inclined to produce a grand fiasco in his efforts to be handyman around the house. (A wholesome countertrend in TV images of Father is the "Father Knows Best" series.)

The father of fifty years ago is contrasted with Father today. We have, of course, an image of the

Victorian father with his beard and mustache, and his patriarchal and at times despotic rule of the family unit. This image has become exaggerated to some extent by memories of theatrical characterizations, such as those in *Life with Father* and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street.*

The real difference in the father of fifty years ago and Father today lies in the nature of his work, his proximity to the family circle during the working day, and his accepted and acknowledged authority. Fifty years ago, the farmer, the small-town shopkeeper, the carpenter, and the tradesman were never far from the family circle as they labored. The visible presence of Father from day to day supported his role and function in the minds of his family. Modern industrial life has forced the father of today to be *absent* from the home long hours of the day or perhaps days on end. Not only is he absent, but he may be long distances from his home, out of reach, out of sight, inaccessible. Furthermore, he does not seem to be the provider for his family—there is no return from the hunt with the meat for the table, no tangible product to be shared with the family. Rather, there is the pay check, a symbol of value to adults, to be sure, but unreal and intangible to children. What does Daddy work for? Why is he away? Where are the visible, tangible products of his labor?

The writer of the article feels that Winter's interpretation is overdrawn. Father is not so completely eclipsed as Winter's book would seem to imply. He has a role that he actually performs, and it is possible to expand his role within the context of modern living so that his being a father is more meaningful to him and more beneficial to his family. In relationship to his wife he is companion and lover. In relation to his children he is breadwinner, he is teacher and model of manliness, and he is the authority figure. These are essential roles, and can be interpreted and expanded creatively. Father has not fully abdicated, and would not wish to. In fulfilling his natural role, however, he has been beset by many rivals.

The writer suggests we consider the husband-father role as described in *Eph. 5: 21-23.* In this passage, the husband is the "head" of the wife, but he is to love the wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. Children are to obey their parents, but parents are admonished to be considerate of children and not to "provoke" them "to anger."

In discussing Father's role, the group should consider the pattern of family life of their parents and grandparents, the pattern of family living today, and the relevance of the counsel offered in *Eph. 5: 21 to 6: 4.*

Questions for Discussion

1. How "close" were you to your father? Was he someone you felt free to talk to, or was he somewhat "removed"? How would you describe his authority in the home? Was he feared? both feared and loved?

2. What was society's attitude toward Father's authority a generation ago? What is society's attitude today? Is Father's role today supported and upheld by society's norms and values?

3. Is there a conflict between fulfilling the role of a husband and father and meeting the obligations of one's vocation? Does the family come second to the demands of a man's work?

4. What does *Eph. 5: 21* mean when it says, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ"? Does this imply *mutual* obligations on the part of husband and wife?

5. What makes a family a *Christian* family?

For Further Reading

Love and Conflict, by Gibson Winter (Doubleday & Co., Inc.; $3.50).

The Creative Years, by Reuel L. Howe (The Seabury Press; $3.50, cloth; $2.00, paper).

Has Mother Abdicated?

By Stephen B. Rybolt

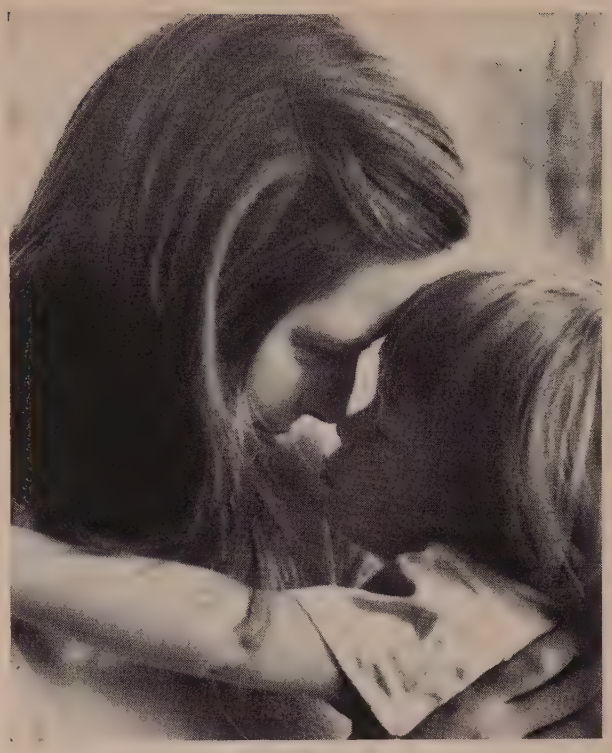
In the preceding article we considered the social and cultural factors that have contributed to the changing pattern of family life with the accompanying confusion as to Father's role. What has happened to Mother's role in the process? Consider Dr. Gibson Winter's statement of the situation as he sees it:

"Child rule is the inevitable result of the father's abdication. It is a natural development in America. We Americans idolize children and youth. Most of us feel that our children should have the best of everything. It is very easy for the American family to gear all its plans to transporting the children, picking up after them, and listening to their endless chatter or silencing the guests so that they can see their favorite TV show. . . . Women refuse to be the center of family life. If Father has abdicated and Mother withdraws, then the children will rule." [1]

That Mother has abandoned her role is substantiated, in Dr. Winter's mind, by the symptoms of disorder with which he is familiar. One symptom is the fact that women today find housework and home life depressing and unsatisfying. Symptom two: Women try to escape into something outside—community projects and service, or clubbing and "socializing about." Another indication to him is the number of women who seek employment and the use of their education and creative interests. "Actually the majority of women are not satisfied with their job in the home and do not feel that it really uses their capacities." [1] Before we conclude that the position quoted is "all wet" and therefore unwarranted, let us take one giant step backward to consider a historical perspective that may have contributed to our situation.

[1] From *Love and Conflict: New Patterns in Family Life,* by Gibson Winter. Copyright © 1958 by Gibson Winter. Used by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

"Few ministries are as naturally and obviously God-given . . . as that of being a wife and mother."



More than the Right to Vote

The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1920. This is simply called the women's suffrage article of the Constitution. It was the outcome of a social pressure called, appropriately, "the feminist movement," and made it legally possible for women to vote. But there were other outcomes. This amendment gave social sanction for women to compete with men in the business world and in professional life. Increasingly, women were applying and being accepted for higher education. Commenting upon this, Pauline Trueblood says:

"The feminist movement was born of atheist parentage. Self-centered women were concerned for their right to live as men live. Wives of men who were not Christian in their practice were easy prey to the arguments of women who sought equal rights by law. Christian people defended the right of women to be treated justly, and the feminists, who cared nothing for the feminine virtues, won the legal right to be equal competitors of men." [2]

Today young women are taught to share public life and community life on a basis of equality. The post-high school education, which an increasing number receive, seldom makes a distinction in the roles they are to assume after college. Joining hands with the educational system is the social impetus for activities outside the home. There are so many other roles besides homemaking offering themselves alluringly to women that conflict, it would seem, is inevitable.

Only Until We Get on Our Feet

For the newly married wife, this conflict may appear to be only a theoretical matter. Often a couple agrees before marriage that the wife will work and thus assist in acquiring those things which reputedly "make" a home. But lo, the theoretical becomes the actual. The two arrive home, after a day's work, tired and hardly in any mood to take up the household tasks. Or, unexpectedly, the wife's employment must be curtailed. But as a new mother the conflict becomes more apparent. There is the longing for the old job and the wider associations it afforded. With a budget necessarily trimmed, yet the needs increasing, the decision to return to employment outside the home is a most pressing one.

Consider also her educational preparation and qualifications. "Why waste myself doing menial things about the house?" is a question that many a wife and mother asks herself. "I am prepared to do many things that will contribute more in the long run to my family and community." So out she goes, and in comes domestic help. The fact that the resulting expense leaves little from her own income does not dissuade her. She is using her education, her creative abilities and, what is more, no longer is she bored by dust-hunting and dirty diapers or shooing children off to school and wiping runny noses.

There may even be a deeper source of the conflict, not so apparent as the economic need. Somehow we have failed to convey the importance of the role of the mother, wife, and homemaker. It would appear that we have failed in maintaining the status of her life's most important role. She does not see the importance of her multitudinous tasks of the home as some of the most vital matters in her life.

What Dr. Winter calls "withdrawal," or the abandonment of her traditional roles, should be modulated at least to a "conflict of roles." For although the social processes have resulted in partly diminishing the opportunity for the father to fulfill his roles, Mother's roles have grown in number. Conflict results from the choices confronting her and the attempts at the fulfillment of these many choices. A quote from William H. Whyte, Jr., is apt here: [3]

"Like their husbands in the office, [wives] are easily misled by the façades of those about them in suburbia, and a frequent consequence is the 'super-

[2] From *The Recovery of Family Life*, by Elton Trueblood and Pauline Trueblood. Copyright, 1953, by Harper & Brothers.

[3] From *The Organization Man*. © 1956 by William H. Whyte, Jr. Used by permission of Simon and Schuster, Inc.

woman' complex. Only a minority of wives are really successful at handling both a large agenda of social or civic obligations and their home duties, but everyone puts up such a good front that many a wife begins to feel that something is wanting in her that she is not the same."

The Fine Art of Marriage

If we have in some measure clarified the conflict of roles of the married woman, we should proceed with some possible resolutions of the situation. It is one thing to point out the situation; it is quite another to aim at necessary helps. One role that every marriage offers to a woman is a companionship, a deeply satisfying emotional partnership. Using her individual gifts and education for the establishment of the home as a center of life for the husband and children is a high calling indeed. We are aware of the need to recover a wholeness in family life, in part as a compensation for the fragmentary nature of the society and world in which we live. With the use of her best abilities, complementing those of her husband, she may deepen family life at crucial points—in the nurture of children, the solidarity of home, and the unity of family in the Christian faith and life.

The role fulfilled in motherhood covers the physical act of bearing and rearing children. But most of us will agree that we mean much more by this term. It would not be difficult to concentrate on some of the not-too-pleasant aspects that come to mind, and yet so many more possibilities are implied, at least for the Christian mother. Love, strength, comfort and assurance, forgiveness, encouragement—all these are involved in the meaning.

Housewife and homemaker are roles that suggest one who organizes a place for the welfare of a family and gives her major thought to it, involving, too, the physical work of serving others. In a relatively impersonal society, this may be one of the major contributions that can be offered by anyone. Countless numbers of personally meaningful acts, rendered in love, give to individuals significance without which life loses much of its meaning.

Marriage and family for women is, perhaps, not so much a role, however, as a ministry. A ministry, in the Biblical sense, is a service, and the work of married women is service of several orders. There is no limit, as we know, to the service that can be rendered. I can think of few ministries as naturally and obviously God-given, and as fundamental to the Christian life, as that of being a wife and mother.

The Jewish religion and the Christian faith have made the marriage a means of expressing the relation of man to God. As the Christian must lose his soul to save it, so the greatest love between a man and woman is that in which they are enabled to give themselves to each other in such a way that they fulfill their own lives in the process.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 3

Before the Discussion

The author reviews for us further research by Gibson Winter. In Winter's view, Mother has abandoned her traditional role as homemaker, nurse, and wife. The break is not complete, however; Mother finds herself in "role conflict," that is, drawn in several directions by competing roles. With the freedom women now enjoy, a wide range of activities is open to a woman: the professions, community and church leadership, wage earner. The freedom and satisfaction enjoyed in these new roles often make homemaking and child care unappealing and lacking in personal fulfillment.

Let's face it, housework is depressing to many wives. Long days spent wrestling with the children, shopping, getting meals, arbitrating quarrels between children, and cleaning house leave the wife in the mood to abdicate. A wife often feels trapped and sees her abilities going to waste. This feeling may be acknowledged. More often it is not acknowledged, but is simply buried in the subconscious. Rebellion against her role may take the form of neurotic symptoms.

The problem of role conflict in wives and mothers is traced by the author to the feminist movement and the expanding rights gained by women, including the right to vote. With many options open to a young woman besides that of homemaker, it is inevitable that there should be conflict in choice as to one's primary vocation.

Economic conditions often make it necessary for the wife to work in order to provide for children's education and to pay for a home. Further, the desire for the things money can buy adds to the motivation to work outside the home. This sort of independent activity outside the home becomes habit-forming for the wife and when she is finally tied down with small children, she yearns for her old freedom.

On the constructive side, the author holds up for consideration the full scope and meaning of marriage *as a vocation and a ministry*. The gifts of the Christian wife and mother, he maintains, may be invested in the growing life of her family; this ministry to her children and to her husband calls for the best in terms of creativity, devotion, and intellectual ability. The art of marriage calls for the best a woman can give; being a companion to her husband may mean acquiring new interests and learning new things. Although she is of necessity involved in the "unsung" and often menial duties of her household, she performs these services with the knowledge that the welfare of her family is enhanced by her efforts. In other words, being a mother and a wife is a vocation in itself.

It is up to the group to evaluate the statements made in the article regarding the serious nature of Mother's role conflict. The group should also evaluate the attempt of the author to resolve the role conflict for the Christian mother by interpreting her role in terms of ministry and vocation.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who is to say what Mother's

role is? How do you go about determining what a person's role is? In the case of Mother, how do you distinguish between customs and mores and the *functional* role of Mother?

2. Doesn't activity outside the home do some mothers a lot of good? Can't creative activities outside the home and the duties of a mother be adjusted? Or is it a case of *either-or?*

3. Does the church provide an adequate ministry to mothers of young children? During the infancy of their children, are not mothers often cut off from intellectual and personal growth?

4. The complexity of our society and the need for more trained persons in the professions (especially education) require that older women switch to new roles and vocations. Should the church encourage women to prepare for future vocations in the church, education, and service institutions?

5. Should a husband see that his wife has an evening out every week? an afternoon off for an activity that contributes to her personal growth?

FOR FURTHER READING

Success in Marriage, by David R. Mace (Abingdon Press; $2.95).

A Good Nursery School

By Paula Trefz

SOME parents have little interest in what sort of nursery school their child is going to attend because of their relief (and perhaps elation) that he is going to any school. These parents obviously want to park the child so that they will be free to do the things that a small child underfoot hinders them from doing.

Most parents, however, have a vital interest in the nursery school that their child attends. They are presented with the problem, often, of *which* nursery school rather than *any* nursery school. Perhaps we can in this article describe helpfully for the interested parents what makes a good nursery school, how to evaluate a school, and how to choose the right school for their child.

Parking Lots

Even the "park 'em and run" parents will find that most nursery schools will demand much more of them as parents than they might expect. Except for very poor schools, most nursery schools normally expect parents, teachers, and children to be involved in the nursery school. Parents and teachers not only have stated conferences, but they also talk over the phone about how the child is doing, what works best with him, and so on. This will not, in most cases, be a surprise to the parents inasmuch as nursery schools usually outline this close co-operation with the parents in preregistration conferences.

There are, of course, "park 'em and run" nursery schools available to parents. These schools provide nothing more than extended daily baby-sitting services. The faculty in such schools is generally undermanned and, also, staffed by more or less untrained personnel. The teachers may conceive that children need lots of love, which of course they do, but love expressed in grabbing children and hugging them is not necessarily the kind of love that children need. Although well-meaning, such teachers do not have the professional experience and background to provide a structure in which expressions of physical affection would be meaningful.

Even in schools that offer better-trained personnel, the general philosophy of education expressed by the school can lead sometimes to nothing better than sophisticated baby-sitting. Parents are not involved in the nursery school. These schools keep the children busy with lots of handwork. The school looks good. The children are busy. But the children are not guided toward any goals. Each day is a goal in itself, and the goal is to keep the children occupied until the time arrives to take them home.

Schools of this nature do not provide the guidance and understanding that children need. Parents who enroll their children in schools of this nature, without knowing what makes for a good nursery school, have perhaps some excuse. Maybe, as has been hinted, these parents want only baby-sitting. But they should consider at some time the components of really good nursery schools before they make the serious choice of *which* nursery school.

Staff

When parents consider a nursery school, the staff should be the first matter to be investigated. Fine equipment in magnificent facilities does not make a good nursery school. A good staff can make use of poor equipment and appropriately better use of good equipment. Staff, thus, is the decisive ingredient.

Ideally, a nursery-school faculty should be composed of prepared personnel who have been fully educated and specially trained in early-childhood education. Such background and training leads a teacher to see the importance of understanding the young child, of course, but also of understanding the parents of the child. The prepared teacher understands how to perceive a parent-child relationship and how to deal with the parents as adults. Tact, communicative and often direct counseling, skill, and a sense of humor are components of a teacher's understanding of the adults she must deal with in guiding the development of the children entrusted to her care.

MRS. EDWARD TREFZ is the director of the Llanerch Presbyterian Church kindergarten in Havertown, Pennsylvania.

". . . he also explores the intricacies of color, texture, and space relationship."

Teachers on a staff should themselves be secure persons. Obviously, a teacher who feels that people are persecuting her—no matter how well trained she is—runs into difficulties and, after facing her own problems, has little insight or strength left to give to children. Emotionally secure teachers can see children through emotionally tense situations without becoming overwrought or needlessly involved.

Perhaps a teacher's emotional security can be gauged best by observing her in action. If emotionally secure, she can wait for the child to grow. She does not dominate or force. She guides. She does not do for the child, but lets him do for himself, thereby providing him with invaluable experiences of succeeding. The teacher who is secure enough to wait with patience and understanding for the child to act is showing by actions that her own fate is not somehow riding on how a particular child performs on a given day.

A good nursery school will be proud of its staff, and the staff will constantly interpret to inquiring parents what is really going on in the school. So, in evaluating a potential nursery school, the staff should be evaluated first.

Curriculum

The staff of a school has much to do with the curriculum of the school, its general approach to children, its basic ideas concerning what should happen to young children, and the contents it employs in guiding children. The following list more or less summarizes the qualities of a program designed to guide the child:

1. The program is flexible. The teacher may have prepared to guide some discussion, play, and song about sunshine. She discovers that one of the children's mother has gone that morning to the hospital. So, the program is changed in order to take account of this dramatic eventuality. Static programs pursued according to plans to the very end cannot be successful, because they do not include plans for novelty and surprise.

2. The child learns by doing. Experiences are provided the child within the range of his interest, understanding, and maturity. He is not forced into activities for which he is unsuited just because the faculty has decided upon them. Activities are designed with the child in mind, for the child.

3. Freedom is established within specified, understood limits. Blocks may be played with in any manner that the child desires, so long as he doesn't injure other children or harm the blocks. A tricycle can be ridden on any sidewalk or asphalt surface, but not on the grass. Freedom without clear limits in the long run produces turmoil for the staff and frustration for the child. Freedom within limits gives him a safe and legitimate sphere of existence in which to operate.

4. Opportunities are provided for the child to learn through all his senses, i.e., smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing. When the child says, "Let me see," he reaches out his hand to grasp the article. He wants to feel it and, most probably, to taste it. He hears music, wants to touch the phonograph, to dance, and see the participation of others.

5. The child is allowed to explore and, through exploration, to develop. Exploration is very much a creative activity and not merely an expression of curiosity. The child is taken places to see new sights, to explore new areas of the world. But he also explores the intricacies of color, texture, and space relationship by use of crayons, paints, clay, material to use in imitation, dress up, mimicry, pretend, etc.

6. The child learns through observable evidence that he is loved and respected for just who he is. He is allowed to fail and learn through failure. His successes are noted and approved. He finds good adult friends who care for *him* and respect who he is—the foundation for healthy life at any age.

The Physical Setup

A good nursery school is located on the ground level of a building with good access to an outside play area. At least one third of the wall space is used for win-

ows. The floor space is large enough to provide each hild in the school with thirty-five to fifty square feet. emperature is 72° and the room is well lighted and entilated. Play equipment is available for play that nvolves the use of large muscles (in case of continued ainy days), creative play (such as a playhouse), a ollage box (containing ribbons, eggshells, straw, pic- ures, and other odds and ends), and for quiet play. he room is designed for the child and can be best ppreciated if an adult will kneel down and look at it rom the level on which a child views it.

The outside play area provides each child with fifty o seventy square feet. Tricycles, swings, seesaw, vagons, a jungle gym, sandbox, and tree are available or the children. Here they develop their large muscles, heir capacity for hard play, and their endurance.

Many nursery schools do not have ideal physical etups, for unavoidable and often unchangeable rea- ons. But a good nursery school will have found ways o deal with the situation so that the physical de- ciency is adequately compensated for. However, if school has poor play space or equipment, the know- ng parent will by this time be quick to ask: "Why loes the staff allow it? And what are their ideas about ursery-school education?"

A Final Criterion

Church-sponsored nursery schools are most apt to look upon education as a dynamic growth of the child, seen in terms of a community of love related through Jesus Christ to a loving God. Consequently, the school will attempt to provide an atmosphere of love and understanding. All children find proof there of love and know that they are understood. The best nursery schools, and best for these very reasons, believe passionately in the following truths concerning the common tasks of Christian nurture:

1. Every person is important in the sight of God.
2. No two people are identical in looks, size, or intelligence. This individuality does not obscure the similarity between people, which means that people (even little people) hold their humanity, their being born, their growing up from babyhood *in common with all mankind.*
3. The individual is constantly changing, ever growing. Each day the child comes to nursery school, he is a different and, in effect, a changed, more grown-up child.
4. Persons need other persons in growing up. Through mutual respect and responsibility growth is fostered.

James Hymes, Jr., has said, "One of the most decisive experiences of American Christianity and our democracy is our experience with children." The right and best experiences with children are to be treasured, planned for, and sought. This makes the choice of a nursery school an important decision that parents should make thoughtfully.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 4

Before the Discussion

One does not have to be a parent of a three- or four-year-old to be concerned with the criteria for evaluating a good nursery school. If one expects to be the parent of nursery-school children, it is not too early to consider the question of "good" and "bad" in nursery schools. Most of us are responsible for the care and spiritual nurture of small children at some point—in the home, the school, the church—and where we are personally involved or in a position to affect policies of such enterprises we should do so intelligently and in keeping with basic Christian values.

The article itself deals with weekday nursery schools. What the article has to say has general validity for other activities in the sphere of Christian nurture: the parent-child relationship in the home, Sunday morning church school, child care at church during worship services and other meetings, and even baby-sitting. The first six years of the child's life are *foundation* years. The basic emotional make-up of the child is profoundly influenced by what goes into his experience in this early period. His sense of security, his sense of adequacy in tasks, his capacity to receive and give love, in short, his capacity for *freedom,* is aided or undermined by his early experiences. Of no small matter, therefore, is the kind of nursery school we select or the kind of church experiences we provide for the very young. The "park 'em and run" approach may be the last resort of harried moms and dads, but there is "a more excellent way," and Mrs. Trefz points us to it.

The section of the article on "Curriculum" gets down to the question of basic goals of the nurture of children. The teacher must respond to the growing and expanding world of the child. She provides experiences within the range of interest and ability of the child. She is "child-centered" in her approach, and yet she *guides* and *plans* meaningful experiences of the nursery-age child.

"Freedom is established within specified, understood limits." This is a simple but profound feature of any learning experience. Responsible use of freedom in later years can come from a home and nursery-school experience of "ordered" freedom.

"The child learns through observable evidence that he is loved and respected for just who he is." If a child is to learn that he is loved, the love he receives must be genuine—no strings attached! He is to be loved "for just who he is." Such a foundation will help the child when he is older to accept himself and others.

The "Final Criterion" is drawn from the root convictions of the Christian faith, and these convictions should be foremost in the minds of those who plan and conduct church-sponsored nursery schools. These root convictions are best expressed in terms of *love* and *respect* for any child of

God. Our love for another person—child or adult—is the overflowing of God's love made real to us in Jesus Christ, his Son.

Questions for Discussion

1. Just what, if anything, can a church-sponsored nursery school provide that would not be provided by a well-staffed, adequately equipped, properly planned and motivated secular nursery school? Is "love" and "respect" from a *church* nursery-school teacher any more valuable than plain old love and respect from a community nursery-school teacher?

2. "If every person is important in the sight of God," how do you translate that proposition into adult-child relationships?

3. What is "growth"? How does it occur? When does it occur? What do we have to do with it?

For Further Reading

Churches already conducting weekday nursery schools or contemplating doing so should obtain a copy of *Church-sponsored Weekday Nurs School and Kindergarten,* a man prepared by Rachel Swann Ada (Available from Presbyterian E tribution Service, 225 Varick Str New York 14, N. Y.; 200 W Adams Street, Chicago 6, Ill.; 2 McAllister Street, San Francisco Calif.) Price, 50 cents.

Parents and teachers of nurse age children should be acquaint with *When They Are Three,* by S G. Klein and Elizabeth C. Gard (The Westminster Press; $1.50).

When They Ask Questions About the Bible

By James D. Smart

Many parents have an uneasiness about the Bible because they know that if they are asked questions about it by their children they may find themselves in embarrassing situations. This is a real fear, because no parent likes to have his ignorance revealed, especially to his children.

Two things are to be said concerning this fear. First, if the parent has learned nothing about the Bible since his own church school days, he has good reason to fear. He not only will be shown up, but, in all likelihood, his own lack of interest in the Bible will be quite apparent to his child and will encourage the child himself not to take the Bible seriously. "My dad's a swell guy, and if he doesn't need to know much about the Bible, then I don't either."

But if the parent is one who takes his Bible in earnest and, because he has read it with care, is aware of how many difficult questions it raises for the thoughtful mind, the answer is a different one. To this parent it must be said that even scholars who have spent their full time for forty years studying the Bible keep finding hard passages in it that they cannot understand. The Bible is a vast book, containing nearly a million words. It consists of translations of ancient documents composed at intervals during a period of more than a thousand years. The most recent ones are over 1,800 years old. The people who wrote the documents spoke languages and used thought forms very different from ours. Their religious practices, their understanding of the world, their whole way of life, was so different from ours that, when we enter their world through the doorways of the Bible, we find everything strange, just as we do when in the present day we visit people of another civilization.

The amazing thing is that the Bible in many of its parts speaks so plainly to us, and not that there are passages difficult to understand. Because it focuses upon the basic problems of our human existence (which remain the same in all ages and all civiliz tions), the Bible speaks to us across the centuries wi compelling power. We are intensely conscious that is addressed to us, and we find ourselves and the i most secrets of our souls revealed in its pages. W open the book of The Psalms, and here are the ve words we need to express our guilt before God, o emptiness and longing, our thankfulness, our con dence and joy. We open the New Testament, and t Jesus who meets us there is no strange antique out an ancient world, but a more real person than anyo we know in the contemporary world. The Bible spea plainly to us if we have ears to hear.

Yet not all parts of it speak plainly. In spite the clarity with which its central message comes acro the centuries to us, the Bible remains a difficult boo full of passages concerning which we may in hones and without embarrassment have to say that we c not yet know how to explain them.

The Adventure of Bible Study

The complexity and difficulty of the Bible can b made to the child not a forbidding thing, but, rathe an invitation to adventure. More young people hav been turned away from the Bible by the impressio (conveyed by parents and teachers) that it is a very very simple book which says just two things over an over: "Believe in God" and "Be good," than by an frightening impression of its difficulties. But whe these young people are introduced to a particular prob lem of Bible study, such as the relationship of the thre parallel Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and ar

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shown how we arrive at an understanding historically f the similarities and differences between them, they re often fascinated. There is an element of detective work in all serious Bible study that appeals to the young mind. It is sheer fun to look for clues and piece together the fragments of evidence in order to build up the picture of the original situation behind the passage or the book. Concealing the difficulties and problems is therefore a bad policy. Young people are much more likely to be interested in a Bible that bristles with first-rate difficulties and calls for hard thinking.

Behind Their Questions

Perhaps some parents will be objecting: "But these are not the kind of difficulties our children bring to us, nothing remotely so interesting. What they want to know is 'Who was Cain's wife?' or 'Did Jesus really walk on the water of the Sea of Galilee?' " Such questions seem trivial and unimportant, and for that reason are in danger of being brushed aside. It is a good rule to consider no question asked by a child as trivial or unimportant, particularly when it has to do with Scripture. We never know what lies behind the surface question. Small minds often ponder big problems, in fact, the central problems of human existence; but the question that gets asked first may seem to be a trivial one. The child asks about Jesus' walking on the water, but what his mind is really trying to get at is who Jesus was and how we are to understand his divinity. Therefore, in order to answer his real question, we have to start farther back and explain why we as Christians believe in Jesus' divinity. Only thus will the child be kept from thinking of that divinity as primarily a magical power to do extraordinary things.

Neither is the question about Cain's wife a trivial one. The child (or the adult) asks this question because he is reading *Gen., chs. 1 to 4,* in a way in which it ought not to be read; he is reading it as though it were a history of the first years of man's life on earth. If those chapters are history, then not only do we want to know where Cain found a wife when there were only his father and mother besides himself on earth, but also we wonder where the people came from who were regarded by Cain and God as potential murderers of Cain. Therefore, the way to answer the child's question is to teach him how to read those opening chapters of Genesis, enabling him to see that they contain something much more wonderful than history: in short, the truth about God, ourselves, and our place in God's world.

Few children today escape the question, Which is true, the story of the world as it is told in history class in school, or the story of creation in Genesis? It is tragic that any of them should be allowed to grow up with the idea that Genesis is chiefly undependable tenth-rate history, when it should be for them the source of an understanding of themselves in relation to God and the world that they can get from no other source.

Far from being embarrassed when a child's question about some passage in the Bible stumps him, the parent should seize upon the opportunity for a joint investigation. "Let's find out" usually meets a ready response from the child. And who can tell where the search may end when once it has begun? As we have already seen, a Biblical question usually has a series of other larger questions lurking behind it. Perhaps the search will lead to the library, and the child will have a taste of hunting out books that will tell him what he wants to know. Or it may lead to the bookstore and the purchase of a reference book, a dictionary of the Bible, or a commentary on the Bible, that will then be a permanent resource in the home for the answering of questions. In some instances, the wisest course may be to suggest a visit to the minister.

There is no end to the questions that may be asked. Some will be historical. Some will arise from complexities of the literature, such as parallel stories in the same book. Some will be theological, in which the mind of the child is groping with the meaning of the Christian faith for him. There will be times when a child's question expresses a doubt about some element in the Christian faith in a way that shocks the parent. Or it may be that the child expresses openly a doubt that the parent has concealed.

Do Not Fear Doubt!

Doubts are like an explosive gas that becomes powerful and dangerous when confined but is relatively harmless in the open. There have been men and women alienated from the church for years because no one answered their fairly elementary historical questions about such books as Genesis and Jonah. There have been eminent thinkers who began in the church but in mature years became agnostics and atheists because their questioning minds were rebuked by naïve representatives of religion. Questions are to be encouraged, not feared, for they are the sign of the mind (and perhaps more than the mind) coming awake and beginning to grapple firsthand with realities.

None of us are ready for the questions of our children. We never shall be completely ready, no matter how hard we try, because it is the stark reality of life itself that rises up and confronts us in our children. We work out solutions for ourselves, answers that we think are adequate and that seem to meet our situation, but in all of them there is compromise; we get weary too soon and settle for something less than the truth. But when the problem comes up afresh before us in the persons of our children, our compromise solution is shown up in all its shabbiness, and we realize that we have to think it out all over again from the beginning. So our children's questions become the provocation and the opportunity for us to break out of the prison of our dull, gray, spiritual haziness and face once more the really big, simple questions of existence with which the Bible confronts us—as though we too were children.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 5

Before the Discussion

As every parent knows, children are born to ask questions. Often these questions are about the Bible, whenever the Bible seems to be a significant book. If children do not ask questions about the Bible, it is because the Bible has no meaning for them, or because their questions have been rebuffed. Questions about the Bible, therefore, are a sign of spiritual health and vitality. Parents and teachers should rejoice when they have the opportunity to discuss these questions with their children.

The tone in which a child asks "Why?" about anything often seems to suggest some incredulity or skepticism. "Why do we have to lock our doors at night?" is asked in such a way that the child seems to be saying, "I think that's a silly thing to do." He may not mean that at all, but that is his tone of voice. When children talk about the Bible in this way, frightened adults may think they have budding infidels on their hands. (As a matter of fact, they do. We are all inherent infidels, until we become believers—about anything: laws for social growth, habits of personal cleanliness, and so forth.) But this is no cause for alarm. It is a golden opportunity for learning and growth.

This resource article helps parents face their child's "Why?" about the Bible. Children want to know why they should read or study the Bible; and, as they grow older and come up against some of its more difficult passages, they want to know why this incident or this person is in the Bible, and what this story or teaching means.

The ability to answer a child's questions about the Bible comes from a firm grounding in the Bible on the part of the adults who are asked the questions, and a willingness to seek the answers with their children from the book itself. Faith and adventure are basic requirements of good Bible study in the home. A third requirement might be to have the resources in the home that will help answer the questions.

There is not space here to list these resources, and it is not necessary to do so, because an excellent article on the subject is easily available to all parents in our church. It is the article "If You Are Buying a Bible Storybook," in *Discovery*, Jan.–March, 1959.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you answer your children's "whys" about anything? In what ways do you suit your answers to their level of understanding? Discuss a few such questions.

2. What is behind some of these questions?

3. Do you find your children acquiring ideas about religion that you wish they did not have? Where do they get them? Why do you disapprove?

4. What ideas about the Bible do your children get from you? from the church school? from their playmates? from radio and television?

5. How do you answer your own questions about the Bible? What do *you* do about the "hard passages"? What are some things in the Bible that you do not understand?

6. What does it mean to have "ears to hear" the Bible?

7. Examine the gospel song, "Tell Me the Old, Old Story." What does it teach about the message of the Bible? Do you think it implies that the Bible message is easy to understand? Is it? Is this a good song for children to learn?

8. Why is the Bible hard to understand? If it is a difficult book, why do we leave it for the children and stop studying it ourselves?

9. When have you made Bible study an adventure with your children? What resources have you used?

10. How do the curriculum reading books and lessons handle the "hard passages"?

11. How do you deal with your children's doubts? Should you be concerned about their doubts? Should you be equally concerned if they do not doubt?

12. What does it mean to read the Bible with the mind (or the faith) of a little child? Discuss *Mark 10: 15* and *Matt. 13: 10-16* in this connection.

For Further Reading

The Teaching Ministry of the Church, by James D. Smart (The Westminster Press, $3.00), Ch. 7.

Barriers to Belief, by Norman F. Langford (Layman's Theological Library, The Westminster Press, $1.00), Ch. 2.

Children and Religion, by Dora P. Chaplin (Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.50), Ch. 8.

How to Size Up an Expert

By John R. Fry

The magazine section of a Sunday paper, not long ago, featured an article by a television entertainer. The article advised parents to give their children love and independence. Another article appeared recently in a "slick" magazine advising parents to provide children with a dependable structure for the living of their lives. This article was written by a psychologist. Yet another article advised parents not to pay attention to self-help articles in magazines and newspapers: the psychiatrist who wrote that article called them "bootstrap" articles. He does not believe that parents can do much constructively to change damaging neurotic situations by tugging at their own bootstraps.

Which one of these three writers is the right one to listen to? Which one is the expert with the knowledge designed for *my* situation? Just how do I size up the expert? This is the question which many parents face

MR. FRY was formerly editor of Crossroads and is now on the staff of *Presbyterian Life*.

when confronted with conflicting advice from conflicting experts. Perhaps the question cannot be answered without someone's posing as a superexpert who can guide parental selection of plain experts. I do not propose to set myself up as that superexpert. But a few clarifying words may be helpful in sizing up the problem of a multiplicity of experts, if not in making final answers about the experts themselves.

Defining the Area of Competence

We are a people who ascribe all kinds of qualities that aren't there to great popular figures. A successful television entertainer can write an article on the highly complicated subject of love and independence because he is successful. A successful plumber who knows just as much about the subject and is just as successful in his trade could not, however, write a successful article for the Sunday paper. Readers would complain, "Who does he think he is?" But readers seemingly accept the entertainer's words of wisdom because he is successful, nationally known, and an entertainer. The same situation obtains when a beauty cream is endorsed by a movie starlet or razor blades recommended by a good baseball player.

The entertainer, whatever else he may be, is not a demonstrated expert in the field of dynamic psychology. For that reason he should not be treated as an expert. He should be regarded as a well-known man whose name and prestige have been used to sell an article.

Parents using minimum common sense do not need to have this point emphasized. They have long ago dismissed the ersatz experts—the cowboys talking about juvenile delinquency, the juvenile delinquent talking about juvenile delinquency, the jazz musician talking about family life, the atomic-energy expert talking about balanced school curriculums, and the submarine commander talking about international relations. Apart from the field of his demonstrated competence, a writer does not qualify as an expert. He is just one more mortal man trying to get an opinion down on paper, and what he writes should be accepted as nothing more nor less than one man's opinion. Most parents know this fact already, but they need to be reminded of its truth because the communications industry daily seeks to sketch the area of a public figure's competence to include another area in which no special competence exists.

Competence in a particular area may never have been demonstrated before (every writer has to have *one* first article, *one* first book). But the competence is demonstrated. The expert knows a particular field of study or experience because he has been in that field. He is no newcomer to its issues, to its contents, to its past and its future. Thus, when he prepares articles advising parents, he writes from the inside of an area as a person competent to interpret for the parents the character of the area.

A psychologist is primarily an expert in psychology. If he tries to rejuvenate a last-place baseball team, as a psychologist attempted to do with the St. Louis Browns, now the first-division Baltimore Orioles, he finds himself out of his area of competence. The Browns fundamentally needed better ballplayers, whom expert scouts and shrewd general managers had to find and develop. The psychologist is expert only in helping ballplayers to perform within the limits of their experience and ability.

Tattle-Tale Gray

The real problem in sizing up an expert occurs, as we have previously indicated, when one expert contradicts another, though both are operating in their field of competence. Parents would be foolish to expect that all the experts in the field of, let us say, family life would have the same point of view. Obviously, they do not. Experts disagree, often radically. They think that they have good reason for disagreement. Parents might begin to expect the contradicting points of view, stop looking for one, great, unanimous, clear, straightforward word of advice, and begin sizing up each expert and his advice solely on their own merits.

Rules for taking advice are nonexistent to date. Certain features of article-reading and speech-listening, however, deserve careful attention. The over-all impression of the article or speech counts for little. The contents count for everything. Thus, a quizzical parent should try to pin down exactly what the expert has said. Has he offered new information, shared new research findings, made daring new proposals, proposed activity that is different? Or has he said the same old thing in a new way? If he has merely decorated some clichés, then he has wasted your time; but if he has something new to say, he has then made a legitimate bid for your interest and agreement. *He* is the expert to listen to, whether you end up in agreement or not.

The overwhelming majority of articles addressed by experts to parents are nothing more than well-hashed-over restatements of the same old thing. This becomes startlingly clear when a parent goes to the trouble of scrutinizing the article. On close inspection it exhibits tattle-tale gray. It tells parents to love and understand their children. It says that a fine line exists between freedom in limits and too much or too little freedom. Parents already know this and consequently don't need to be told one more time.

Other evidences of tattle-tale gray can be found in the structure and layout of the article itself. The tired expert's opinion is most apt to appear in *very* clear prose that is so simply stated that sixth-graders could easily understand every word and grasp every thought —this means, inevitably, that the expert has boiled out most of the problem in boiling it down. He has ordinarily skirted crucial issues in order to make a clear, simple, easily read article. Perhaps the experts are not at fault, because magazines and newspapers vying for huge mass-audience readership must have "mass-type" articles. But not all the blame for slick

evasions of profound issues can be laid at the door of the communicators. Much of it still belongs to the expert who has consented to write an article that he knows to be only part of the truth.

The Authentic McCoy

Basically, an expert has to be judged on one, single, 14-carat criterion: Does he make complete sense? This means, does what he has to say ring true? Is it authentic? the "real McCoy"?

We live in an age in which scientific findings have been virtually deified, among people who perform most of the functions of everyday life pretty much according to the rules established by style and taste makers. Consequently, we are apt to contravene our own good sense because of science or style or prevailing taste. The unbelievable way in which American parents rear their children is a case in point. *They* don't really rear their own children. Experts do. And if the experts change their minds, child-rearing methods change accordingly. Parents are ever tempted to entrust many important matters to the hands of experts, *because* they are experts. And when they do, parents lose touch with their own ideas and, thus, with the authentic inner sense, without which they cannot really even judge the validity of the experts' opinions.

Parents have no way of sizing up the expert unless they first size up their own ideas, situation, past, present, and future. As a motion-picture critic, I receive countless letters from parents who want advice about particular movies. These are ultimately pitiful letters because the parents do not trust their own artistic standards. They do not usually preview movies themselves. Thus, they depend on the views of a critic to provide a yes or a no and have, literally, no further voice in the matter. Parents who say, in effect, that they can't preview movies before allowing their children to attend are really saying that movies have little influence on children.

Life simply cannot be given over to the experts. It is lived by parents and children who are responsible for their own lives. They will in the future do a much better job of living if they allow experts to speak *to* them rather than *for* them. When that happens, the only advice parents dare listen to will be the authentic McCoy—their own inner sense of judgment.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 6

Before the Discussion

Adult education in the United States assumes many forms. In terms of sheer quantity of words and number of readers and viewers, the greatest amount of adult "education" is being done by the media of mass communication: newspapers, periodicals, motion pictures, radio, and television. The article by Mr. Fry raises the fundamental question of the *value* —and even the basic truth—of much that is printed on family problems. Americans in many cases are seeking help and advice from sources that are less qualified to give advice than a multitude of other persons—including themselves!—who have never published articles and could never be classified as "experts." Entertainers write articles and dispense advice in areas in which they have no special training or competence. So do athletes, successful industrialists, Miss Americas, and nuclear scientists! All these and many other well-known individuals may have worth-while things to say, but they should not be considered experts or accorded the role and respect of infallible oracles on matters of family living, parenthood, politics, and religion.

The point is made that the editing of articles for use in mass-circulation periodicals often results in the removal of a really distinctive contribution to the readers' thought that would be valuable. Many articles are a "rehash" of a previous "rehash." On the other hand, much significant writing in the field of psychology, sociology, and anthropology may seem too formidable for the nonprofessional reader. A happy medium (or at least a tolerable compromise) may be possible. The dissemination of basic information and the interpretation of new insights and developments in the fields of knowledge that bear on family problems can be done *effectively* by magazines and newspapers.

Readers should apply their own standards and criteria to what they read. Readers should allow an article to speak *to* them rather than *for* them. One can be critical of what he reads without developing a closed mind. There are parents who say, "No one is going to tell *me* how to rear my children!" That is as it should be: no one should tell you. Rearing children is *your* responsibility. On the other hand, your own thinking and your own store of knowledge can be expanded by listening to an "authentic" expert and accepting, rejecting, or modifying his views in terms of your own needs, values, and experience.

Questions for Discussion

1. What qualifies a person to speak on questions of family living or child-rearing? Does one have *to be* a parent to speak on family problems? Does one have to be a "successful" parent in order to speak to parents?

2. To what extent are we to trust our own judgments in facing family situations? Suppose we are poorly informed? Suppose we have acquired from our own parents or associations methods and values that are faulty or harmful?

3. Why have parents lost "touch with their own ideas" and "an authentic inner sense" of what they believe about family living? How can such a sense be restored?

4. Speaking of experts, how are we to judge the Biblical writers where they speak of parent-child and husband-wife relationships?

5. What is your reaction to the assertion that is frequently made: "All you need to do is *love* your children, and if they know you do, everything will work out well"?

6. Who are the persons in your own church community who could offer valuable counsel and assistance in problems of family living? On what do you base your selection?

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Over the Crossroads Desk

Since 1945, when the first atomic bomb was perfected by the United States and used against Japan, the alternatives for the human race have been drastically reduced. The superiority in nuclear weapons that the United States initially maintained has yielded to a new "balance of terror" in which both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. possess stockpiles of hydrogen bombs and the capacity to deliver them to the heartland of the other country. Both stand ready to play the deadly game of "fast draw" with nuclear weapons.

During the fifties, England and France joined the "nuclear club." Both have produced and tested weapons. Communist China will most certainly attempt the development of nuclear weapons in the near future. A recent news report indicated that a "cheap" process for obtaining Uranium 235 from Uranium 238 has been developed in West Germany. This development adds to the likelihood that other countries will consider producing atomic weapons. Unless some means of international control is agreed upon and implemented soon, we face the bone-chilling prospect of smaller countries, such as Cuba, Egypt, or the new African nations, producing atomic weapons and brandishing them at their neighbors and at us.

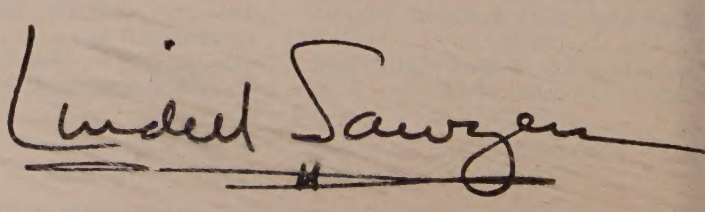
The potentialities for the total destruction of human life now exist. In the novel *On the Beach,* Nevil Shute builds his story around the imagined circumstances following a third and final world war, in which nuclear weapons are employed. Those not killed by direct bomb strikes are doomed to die through the radiological side effects of the nuclear blasts carried round the earth by the winds. The chief characters of the novel know they will die; the novel is the account of their last days. Neither God nor religion figures significantly in the end of the world. *On the Beach* sets forth an eschatology *without God.*

What do we who believe in the God who is *Lord of history* have to say in the face of man's newly found capacity for self-annihilation? An acquaintance of mine confessed to me after reading *On the Beach* that he thought the total annihilation of the human race was an "angle" for a novel, but he really didn't believe God would allow such a thing to happen. Is such a statement admissible? There is a part of me that wants to believe the statement, but there is another part that asks whether such an assumption takes seriously man's sin *or* man's freedom. And then there is the question of God's freedom. For his part, man has accumulated an impressive record of wrong choices. These are the principal subject matter of history. Have we any reason to expect better things from man? Certainly, to say that God will inevitably intervene to rescue man from his folly is an assumption to which we have no right—and it is a dangerous assumption if it leads us to relax our constructive efforts to control nuclear energy and achieve some agreement on disarmament.

Man is free, but God acts out of his own sovereign freedom. Man is created "in the image of God"; man reflects in his being the glory of his Creator, although that glory is shattered and dimmed by man's sin. God does not exist for man; man exists for God. We find it difficult to acknowledge that God can exist apart from us, his creatures. It is man who likes to pretend that God is dependent on him. In his pride man places himself at the center of the universe and sees God as subject to his will.

God has graciously declared himself to be on man's side. He has not chosen to remain aloof from his creation. Jesus Christ is God's living declaration of that fact. Here is our ground for hope. We are not to "presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience" (*Rom. 2:4*). Rather, we are to receive God's mercy and rejoice in it.

Where, then, do we stand? From man's side nuclear destruction is more than a possibility. It threatens us every moment. Man is sinner and man is finite. From God's side there is promise. God has revealed the depth of his love for man. He has disclosed his purpose for man in the man Christ Jesus. We cannot presume to explore further the mind of God, but our own course is clear: to live in faithful response to God, to serve the world and offer our lives willingly for its redemption, and to explore every avenue of reconciliation between persons, nations, and peoples.



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The Interpretation of Scripture

JAMES D. SMART

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Don't Be Baffled . . .

by the problems of your children

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